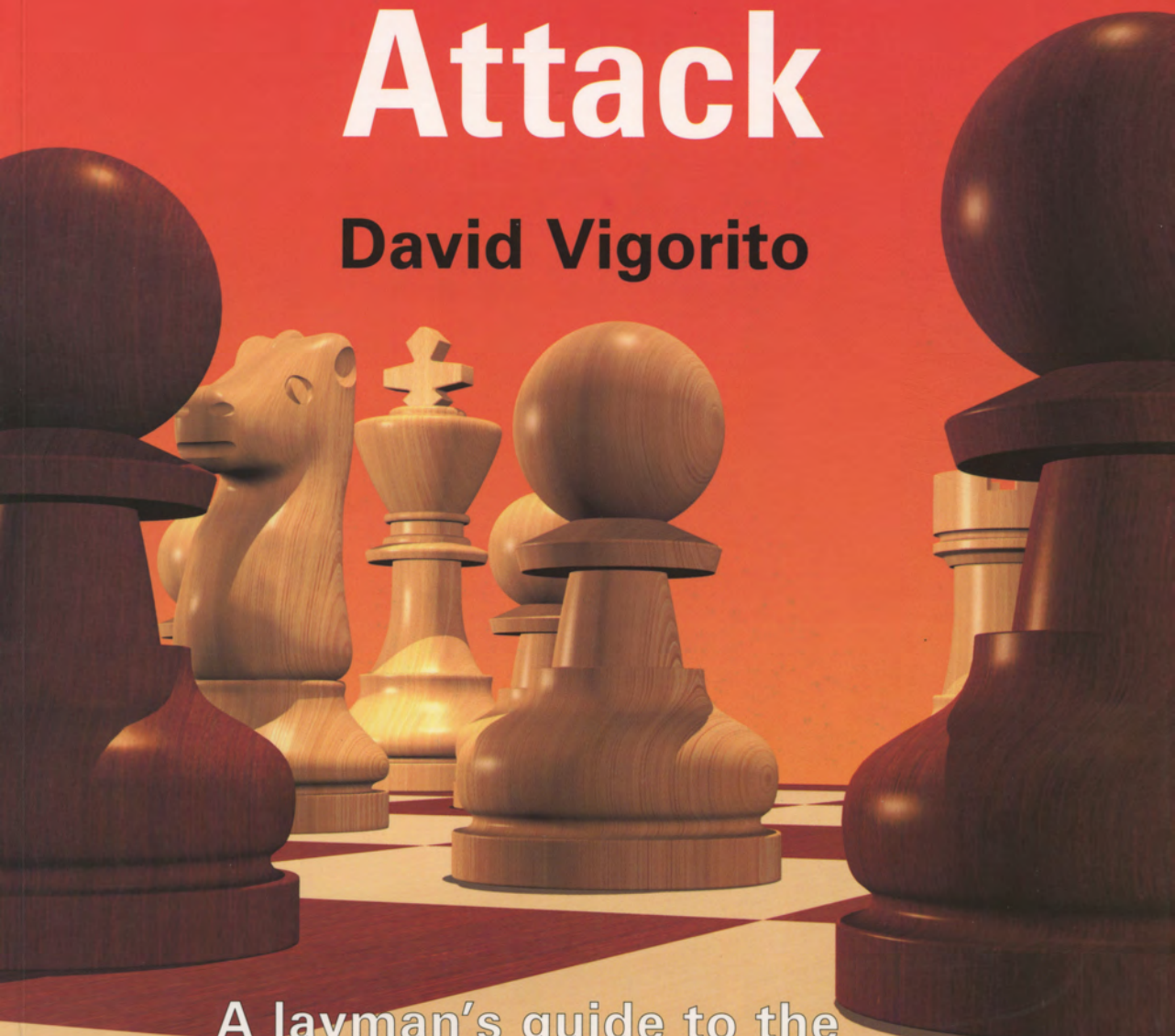
Understanding the Marshall Attack

David Vigorito



A layman's guide to the supergrandmasters' favourite gambit

GAMBIT

Understanding the Marshall Attack

David Vigorito

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First published in the UK by Gambit Publications Ltd 2010

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ISBN-13: 978-1-906454-17-3
ISBN-10: 1-906454-17-5

DISTRIBUTION:
Worldwide (except USA): Central Books Ltd, 99 Wallis Rd, London E9 5LN, England.
Tel +44 (0)20 8986 4854 Fax +44 (0)20 8533 5821. E-mail: orders@Centralbooks.com

Gambit Publications Ltd, 99 Wallis Rd, London E9 5LN, England.
E-mail: info@gambitbooks.com
Website (regularly updated): www.gambitbooks.com

Edited by Graham Burgess
Typeset by Petra Nunn
Cover image by Wolff Morrow
Printed in Great Britain by The Cromwell Press Group, Trowbridge, Wilts.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Gambit Publications Ltd
Managing Director: Murray Chandler GM
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Symbols

x	capture	+–	White is winning
+	check	±	White is much better
++	double check	⩲	White is slightly better
#	checkmate	=	the position is equal
!!	brilliant move	⩱	Black is slightly better
!	good move	∓	Black is much better
!?	interesting move	–+	Black is winning
?!	dubious move	1-0	the game ends in a win for White
?	bad move	½-½	the game ends in a draw
??	blunder	0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(D)	see next diagram	Ch	championship

Dedication

For Heather

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Jim Rizzitano for his support, Joe Fang for access to his library, and to Graham Burgess for his patience!

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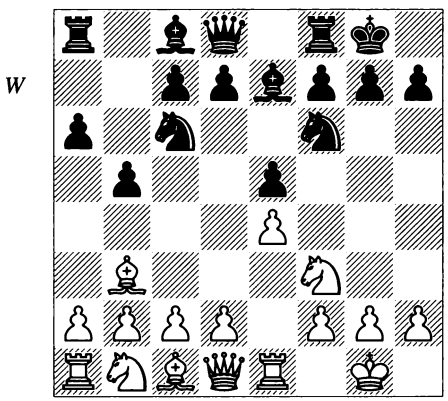
Introduction

It is a pleasure to introduce my second book for Gambit. The Marshall Attack in the Ruy Lopez is one of the most important openings in all of chess theory. It has been played by many of the world's top players over the last couple of decades, including Anand, Kramnik, Ivanchuk, Leko, Adams, Kamsky, Bacrot, Svidler, Short, Grishchuk, Shirov, Ponomariov, Yakovenko, Beliavsky, Harikrishna, Kasimdzhanov, Akopian, I.Sokolov, Khalifman and especially Aronian. This book is designed to give Black a workable knowledge of the whole complex of the Marshall Attack arising after the following move-order:

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0! *(D)*

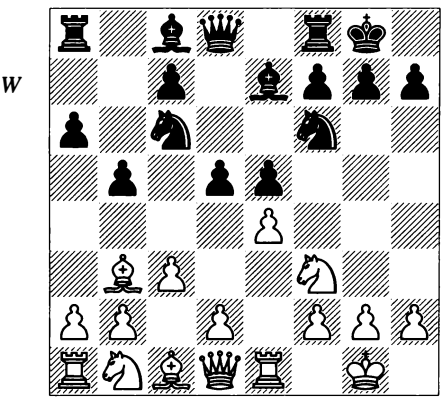


By playing this move (instead of 7...d6) Black signals his intention to play actively. The main lines of the Ruy Lopez which arise after 7...d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 allow White to follow up with 10 d4, which gains space in the centre. While Black has many respectable systems to choose from here (especially the Chigorin, Breyer and Zaitsev systems), they all allow White to seize space in the centre. Because of this advantage, White is able to play with a certain initiative, and many players would prefer not to defend a solid, but cramped, position. By playing 7...0-0 Black shows (or at least hints!) that he is not willing to defend a middlegame with less space.

8 c3

White intends to build a broad pawn-centre with a quick d4. After 8...d6 9 h3 (preventing the pin ...♗g4, which would put pressure on White's centre) White is ready to play 10 d4. However, by using the move-order 7...0-0, Black can throw a spanner in the works and attempt to seize the initiative by opening the position immediately. Many players prefer to avoid the Marshall Attack by playing various Anti-Marshall systems. We shall look at these ideas in the second part of the Introduction.

8...d5! *(D)*



It is this move that constitutes the Marshall Attack. Black can also use the Marshall move-order as a bit of a bluff and head back into Closed lines with 8...d6, but we have no interest in that approach. By offering a pawn, Black avoids the 'Spanish Torture' often associated with White's space advantage in the Closed lines of the Ruy Lopez. For the pawn, Black will get free development while White's move c3 hinders his b1-knight from quickly entering the game. Because White's kingside is suddenly lacking in defenders, Black hopes that his development lead translates into an attack against the white king. However, that is not the

only way that Black ends up with compensation for the pawn. There are many instances where Black seeks his fortune in the centre and on the queenside.

9 exd5

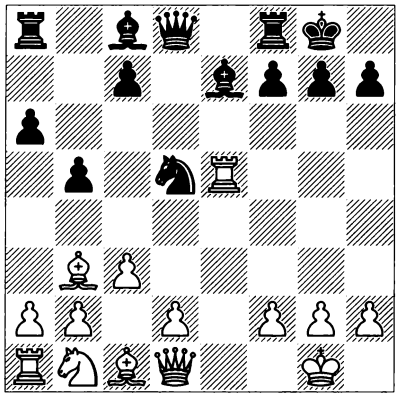
White can still bail out with 9 d4. This is not terribly dangerous and it is covered in Chapter 10.

9...♘xd5

The old Steiner Variation, 9...e4, has been considered dubious for years and will not be covered here.

10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 *(D)*

B

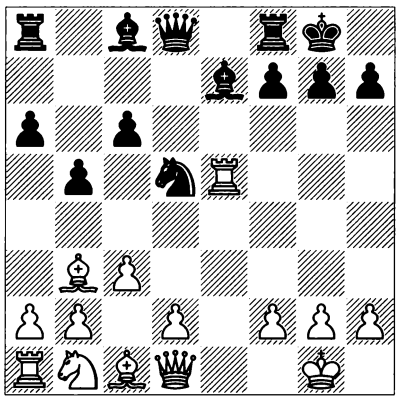


11...c6!

Black simply protects the d5-knight and intends to play ...♗d6 and ...♕h4. Marshall himself originally played 11...♘f6?! (intending ...♘g4) in the Marshall Attack's inaugural game against Capablanca. Marshall had been saving his idea for this particular occasion, but Capablanca reacted with the remarkably cool 12 d4 (the actual move-order was 12 ♖e1 ♗d6 13 d4) 12...♗d6 13 ♖e1 (13 ♖e2 is also considered to be strong) 13...♘g4 14 h3 ♕h4 15 ♕f3 ♘xf2 (this was Marshall's original concept) 16 ♖e2 (16 ♗d2 has also scored well for White) 16...♗g4 (16...♘g4 can be met by 17 g3! ♕xh3 18 ♕xa8 ♕xg3+ 19 ♕g2) 17 hxg4 ♗h2+ 18 ♔f1 ♗g3 19 ♖xf2 ♕h1+ 20 ♔e2 ♗xf2 (after 20...♕xc1 21 ♕xg3 ♕xb2+ White has a pleasant choice between 22 ♘d2 ♕xa1 23 ♖xf7 and 22 ♔d3 ♕xa1 23 ♔c2) 21 ♗d2! and White started to take over in Capablanca-Marshall, New York 1918.

11...♗b7 is, on the other hand, rather respectable. It has seen a few high-level outings by such players as Short and Kamsky, but despite their relative successes it has not caught on. After 12 ♕f3 (White can also play 12 d4, when Black has some compensation after either 12...♗f6 or 12...♕d7) 12...♗d6 13 ♗xd5 (worse is 13 ♖xd5? ♖e8!, which favours Black after either 14 ♔f1 ♕e7! 15 ♕d1 ♕h4 16 ♖h5 ♕e4 or 14 ♕xf7+ ♔xf7 {14...♔h8! looks interesting as well} 15 ♖xd6+ ♔f8 16 ♖xd8 ♖axd8 17 ♔f1 ♗e4!) 13...c6 14 ♖e2 cxd5 15 d4 ♕c7 16 g3 ♖ae8 and after either 17 ♗e3 or 17 ♘d2 Black clearly has some positional compensation. Whether it is enough is difficult to determine... Because this line does not appear to be trusted by the world's elite players and I do not have anything special to add to old theory, this book will only focus on 11...c6 *(D)*, to which we now return.

W



12 d4

This is the most natural move. White is not afraid and fights for space in the centre. This is the main line and is the most popular way of fighting the Marshall Attack.

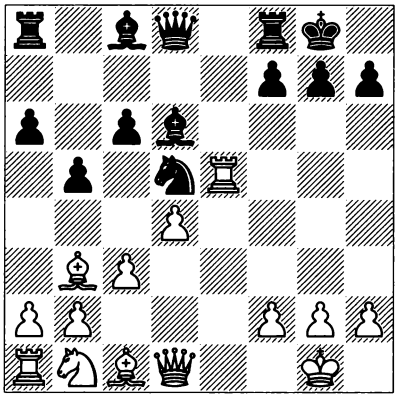
The quieter 12 d3 has been very popular too. This move gives White control of the e4-square which gives rise to some interesting tactical possibilities. After 12...♗d6 13 ♖e1, Black can play as he does in the main lines with 13...♕h4 (Chapter 5) or take aim at the d3-pawn itself with 13...♗f5 (Chapter 6). Other moves such as 12 ♖e1 (and the related 12 g3) and the committal 12 ♗xd5 are covered in Chapter 7.

12...♗d6 *(D)*

13 ♖e1

This simple retreat is the most popular and natural continuation. The odd-looking 13 ♖e2

W



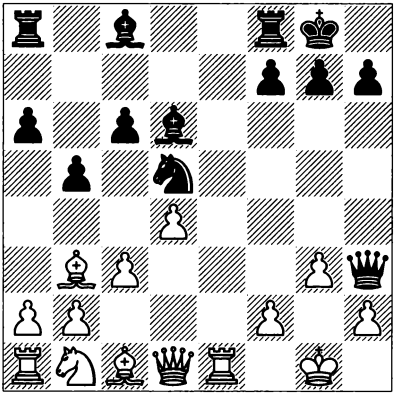
covers the second rank and is considered in Chapter 7.

13...♕h4 14 g3

This weakens the light squares around the white king, but it gains time by attacking the black queen. It is necessary though, because after 14 h3? Black can simply play 14...♗xh3! 15 gxh3 ♕xh3 16 ♖e5 (16 f4 ♘xf4! 17 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 18 ♖e2 ♖ae8 gives Black an overwhelming attack) 16...♗xe5 17 dxe5 and here Black has a pleasant choice between 17...♖fe8, 17...♖ae8, 17...♖ad8 and 17...♕f5.

14...♕h3 *(D)*

W



Black intends to play ...♗g4 and ...♖ae8 to complete his development and fuel his initiative. White has to decide how to develop his pieces.

15 ♗e3

This develops the bishop to allow ♘d2 while protecting f2 and blocking the e-file. The main alternative is the rook-lift 15 ♖e4, which is covered in Chapter 4. Alternatives such as the committal 15 ♗xd5 are considered in Chapter 7.

15...♗g4 16 ♕d3

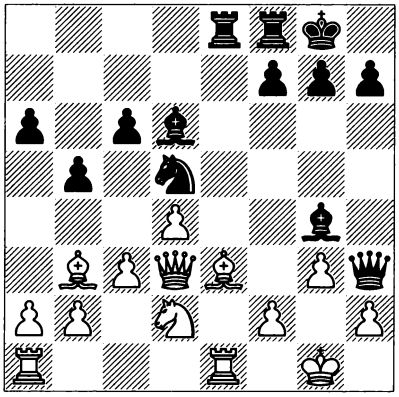
White cannot play 16 f3? due to 16...♗xg3! with a strong attack.

16...♖ae8

Black activates his last piece. Note that 16...♗f3? can be met by 17 ♕f1!. This idea is one of White's principal defensive resources in the main lines of the Marshall Attack. The somewhat rash pawn advance 16...f5 is covered in Chapter 3.

17 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



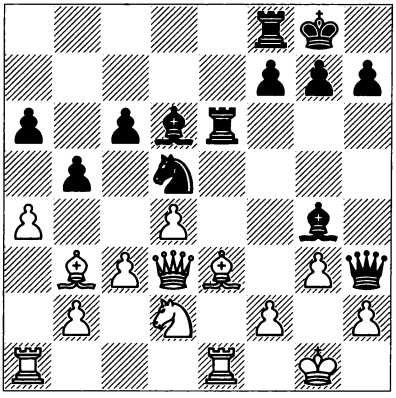
White has caught up in development and is ready to open the queenside with a4, so Black must play very actively.

17...♖e6

This is the main line. Black may double rooks on the e-file and he could possibly use the rook along his third rank. Black can also initiate a pawn advance with 17...f5 or play the flexible 17...♕h5, both of which are covered in Chapter 3.

18 a4 *(D)*

B



This advance is White's main resource. Not only does White want to open the a-file for his rook, but he introduces the concrete threat of 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 ♕xb5 winning a second pawn. White has a few alternatives, of which the most topical is Kramnik's 18 ♕f1 ♕h5 19 f3!?, which is discussed in Chapter 3.

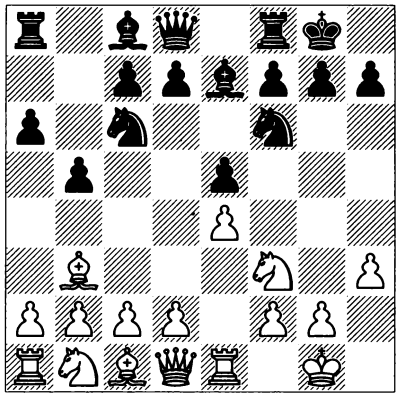
After 18 a4 Black has two main ways to play. He can ignore White's threat and play 18...f5, intending the further advance ...f4 to destroy White's kingside. The move 18...bxa4 looks like a different approach altogether, but in fact these two moves often reach the same position, although for very specific tactical reasons, it seems that 18...bxa4 is the preferable route. The details of these tactical lines are covered in Chapter 2. Black's most popular move at elite level is 18...♕h5. This retreat protects the d5-knight and so allows Black to meet ♗xd5 with ...♕xd5, thus avoiding the destruction of his pawn-chain. Although Black may get a direct attack in these lines, in general Black is playing for positional compensation by means of piece-play. This move was introduced by Spassky and is covered in Chapter 1.

Anti-Marshall Lines

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 h3 *(D)*

This unassuming pawn move is currently the most popular Anti-Marshall Line. Formerly, 8 a4 (Chapter 8) was White's main method of avoiding the Marshall. Black can then develop with 8...♗b7 or play the modern preference 8...b4. White can also seek to open the position immediately with 8 d4 (Chapter 10), but that gives Black a pleasant choice between transposing to a line of the Closed Ruy Lopez with 8...d6 9 c3 ♗g4! or accepting the invitation to an open fight with 8...♘xd4. White does have alternatives such as 8 d3, but by playing this way White forgoes the option of gaining space with a quick d4, and Black should not experience any major difficulties.

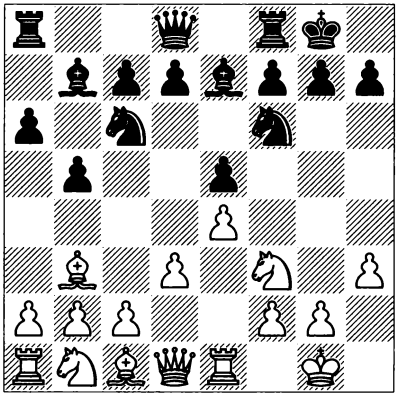
So what is the point of 8 h3? Well, first of all it gives Black the chance to fall back into the main lines of the Closed Ruy Lopez with 8...d6 9 c3! By playing 8 h3, White makes a rather useful move while not quite giving up on the idea of playing d4.



8...♗b7

Black develops a piece and sets a little move-order trap of his own. Now if White plays 9 c3, then 9...d5! is an even better Marshall Attack for Black, because ...♗b7 will certainly be more useful than h3 if the position opens up. So White changes gears.

9 d3 *(D)*



Now this move is quite logical, because the e4-pawn is well protected and the b7-bishop may find itself passively placed. In fact, Black will often retreat the bishop back to c8 at some point in order to challenge White's light-squared bishop with ...♗e6.

9...d6

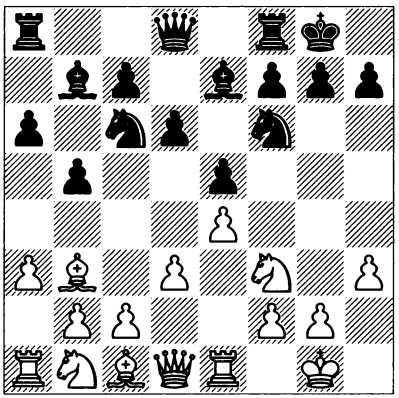
Now that White's d-pawn has taken a step forward, Black is willing to play a slower position too because he will not be suffering for space. By securing the e5-pawn, Black also threatens to grab the bishop-pair with ...♘a5. Recently, playing in Marshall Attack style with 9...d5!? has been resurrected as well, and

this modern gambit is also examined in Chapter 9.

10 a3 *(D)*

White would like to keep his bishop on the nice a2-g8 diagonal, especially with Black's bishop far away on b7.

B



Because White's play has been rather slow, Black has a lot of choice in how to set up his pieces. There is the 'Breyer' retreat 10...♘b8, intending to reposition the knight on d7 while allowing ...c5 or ...c6. Black can also play in 'Zaitsev' style with 10...♕d7. This connects the rooks and also allows the manoeuvre ...♘d8-e6. The classical plan, however, is to play in 'Chigorin' style with a quick ...♘a5 and ...c5. Although playing like this decentralizes Black's knight, he does gain a tempo by attacking the b3-bishop, and the knight's influence on the b3- and c4-squares could have some importance. After gaining space with ...c5, the knight may also return to the fray by just coming back to c6 without worrying about being pushed again by White's d-pawn, as it is more passively placed at d3 than it would be on d4. In general, this is the approach that is advocated in this book. Not only is it the most popular approach, but it is the most in accordance with classical play in the Ruy Lopez.

One must always remember that a Marshall player is first of all a Ruy Lopez player. There will always be lines that White can play to avoid the Marshall Attack even before move 8, such as the Exchange Variation, 5 d4, lines with a very early ♘c3 or d3, etc. None of these lines are covered here, but the reader may want to refer to *The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black* by Johnsen and Johannessen. Of course, White can avoid the Marshall even earlier with anything from the King's Gambit to the Four Knights Game. For these lines I refer the reader to *Beating the Open Games* by Emms.

Recommendations

The Marshall Attack is a rich opening with a long history. I think it can be employed by players of all levels, from club player up to world-championship level. Although it has a reputation as being drawish, this is only likely to be true at a very high level indeed. On the contrary, I believe that for most players the Marshall Attack would be an ideal weapon. It is dangerous and also has the benefit of being a logical, classical opening that can help develop one's chess overall. Besides, below master level it is much easier to attack than it is to defend, and to get a chance to do so with Black right from the opening should be welcomed!

For the typical club player, I would start by going through Chapter 2, the Old Main Line. Although this variation has fallen out of favour, it contains an abundance of typical Marshall Attack themes. In the Old Main Line, Black burns all his bridges and *must* play for the initiative. The value of every move is high and one can learn a lot about attack, defence and counterattack by going through the lines in this chapter. Similar play can be found in the Pawn Push variations of Chapter 3. Although one may not want to play these lines forever because of their rather dubious theoretical value, I think the creative black player could get some mileage out of these systems if he picks and chooses his lines carefully.

Next I would study the lines of Chapters 4 and 5. The Modern Variation can lead to some very odd scenarios. Here it is common for White to offer material, usually the exchange, in order to wrest the initiative from Black. If Black is not careful, his position can soon become a positional wreck because of the pawn advance on the kingside with ...g5. Black must pay attention to the initiative and not just 'win' the exchange as soon as it is offered. Although the lines of the Modern Variation are not quite as cut-throat as the ones that are found in Chapter 2, the positions contained in this chapter could go a long way towards showing the balance between initiative and material.

If White plays 12 d3, I think it is best to study the lines of Chapter 5 with 13...♕h4. These lines are not so popular nowadays but they have hardly been refuted and I think they well illustrate typical Marshall ideas. The themes are a little less obvious than the barbaric approaches of Chapter 2, but the positions are well suited to show how Black should fight for the initiative while a pawn down.

Once you have investigated the main and most instructive systems it is time to move on to the more subtle variations and the sidelines. While most lines from Chapter 7 are not terribly dangerous theoretically, one may encounter them often in practice, whether as a surprise weapon or as a consequence of White simply not knowing the main lines. Black should also pay attention to some of the deviations on move 18 contained in Chapter 3, especially Kramnik's line with 18 ♕f1.

Finally, I would study the lines of Chapter 1 and Chapter 6. The Spassky Variation is practically the universal choice of the world's best players and it has an excellent theoretical reputation. In these lines Black must not rely only on attacking skills, but also on 'feel' of the position. Black plays positionally here, and, being a pawn down, he must develop a good sense of what constitutes compensation. The same holds true in Chapter 6. In the main lines here Black can look to draw a pawn-down ending or play a middlegame where he is sometimes two pawns down. Both of these approaches are quite viable, and I would recommend that the Marshall student study both approaches because they will help develop an understanding of the Marshall Attack as well chess in general. You never know, if you are attacking and something goes wrong, you could find yourself defending a pawn-down ending, depending on the bishop-pair to provide enough activity to hold the game. Conversely, if positional play is not working, sometimes you may have to go all-out for the attack, a pawn or two deficit notwithstanding.

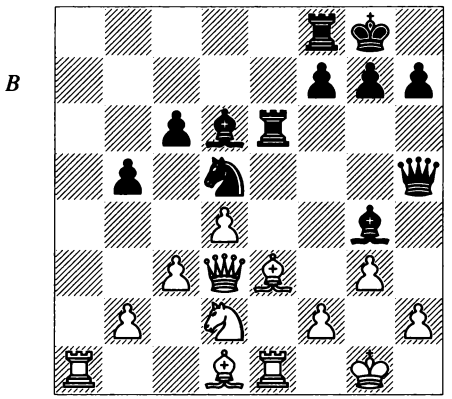
Of course, there is the final part of the book as well: the Anti-Marshalls. A few of these lines are quite sharp, notably the 9...d5 gambit of Chapter 9 and the central thrust 8 d4 of Chapter 10. Overall, however, the play in these chapters is of a more strategic nature. That's just chess; you cannot always force the play, especially with Black. The good news, however, is that these lines should hardly scare Black because he is generally fighting on even ground. Unlike most Closed Ruy Lopez lines, in the Anti-Marshalls Black usually has as much space as White does. Big novelties are rare in the Anti-Marshalls and a player who learns the ideas of the systems recommended in this book can look forward to the middlegame with confidence.

The key to playing the Marshall Attack is absorbing typical ideas. These include typical tactical motifs for both sides, direct attacking ideas, and even defensive ideas. While many positions can become quite complicated and tactical, often the play is positional in many respects – Black is a pawn down but has some initiative. In order to prevent White from gradually neutralizing Black's threats and consolidating his position, Black must find a way to disturb White. Often this is with relatively quiet moves that simply improve the positioning of his pieces. There are pawn moves too, whether they are a typical ...f5 pawn-rush, a probing ...h5 or a central hit with ...c5. Throughout the book, there are plenty of diagrams to show Black's various methods of troubling White. The Marshall student should worry less about memorizing variations and focus on learning ideas. By using this method there is a much better chance of success, because if one's memory fails, the problems can still be solved if one has a good understanding of the positions that arise.

Typical Ideas in the Marshall Attack

Here we look at twenty common themes that arise in the Marshall Attack. Anti-Marshall ideas are generally less striking so I have chosen to let the respective Anti-Marshall chapters illustrate the ideas on their own. The chosen examples from the Marshall Attack vary from tactical ideas to positional themes and include mating ideas as well as endgame patterns. Of course, there are many other ideas that will be shown throughout the book, but this is a little sampler to whet the reader's appetite.

Rook-Lift



Hellers – I. Sokolov
Haninge 1989

White always has to be wary of all destructive ideas near his king.

20...♘xe3!

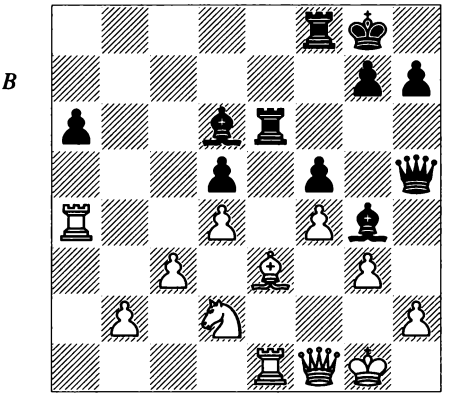
The game continued 20...♗xd1 21 ♖axd1 f5 22 ♘f1 f4 23 ♗c1 ♖ef6, when Black had a strong attack, but the text-move is even better.

21 fxe3 ♗xg3! 22 hxg3 ♖h6

and White will soon be mated.

The ...♕e8 Fork

The next position has arisen several times. Here White has just wrongly captured a pawn on a4.

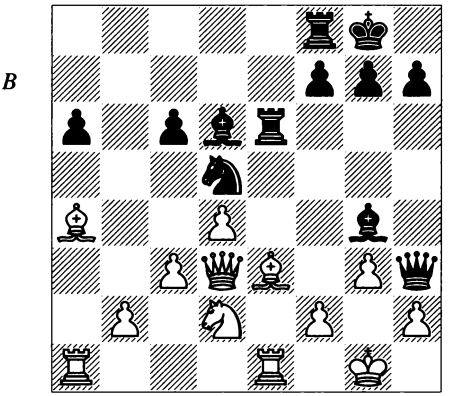


Renet – Nunn
European Team Ch, Haifa 1989

22...♕e8! 0-1

White cannot save both the a4-rook and the e3-bishop.

Pin along the Third Rank



Cao Sang – Hazai
Hungarian Team Ch 1997/8

White does not look to be in any danger here, but Black has a typical idea using the fact that the white queen is undefended on d3. There is a

reason why White often hurries to evict the black queen with a quick ♕f1.

19...♗f4!

Sometimes a move like this works because Black has doubled rooks along the e-file. Black has ideas like ...♘xe3 followed by ...♗xg3.

20 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 21 ♕f1 ♘e2+ 22 ♖xe2

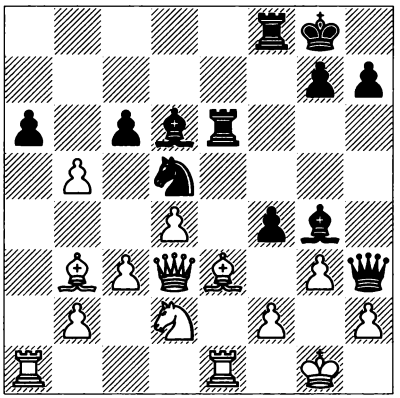
22 ♔h1 ♕h6! is very strong, because of ...♗f3 mating ideas.

22...♖xe2 23 ♘c4

Now Nunn's suggestion 23...♖e6 would have given Black the better chances.

White Sacrifices a Piece to Stem Black's Attack

W



De Oliveira – Maffei
corr. 1999

This position arises from the 'Internet Refutation' covered in Chapter 2. White has captured on b5 and Black has answered with the decisive-looking advance ...f4.

20 ♗xf4!

White just gives up a bishop to eliminate the dangerous black f-pawn.

20...♗xf4

Later we shall see that other moves are not much better.

21 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 22 bxa6!

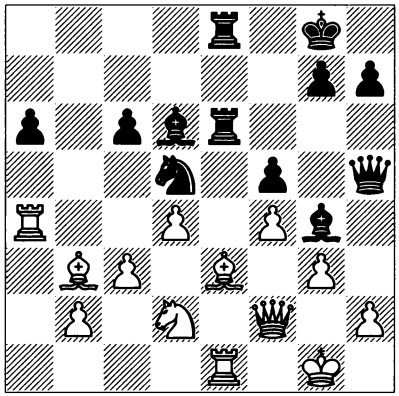
This is better than taking on c6. Now White has four pawns for the piece and the passed a6-pawn ensures that White will keep the initiative.

22...♗xd2 23 ♕xd2

and White went on to win.

Kingside War

B



R. Junge – Wegner
Bundesliga 1988/9

Here we have a typical situation. Black has a very active position but his queenside is crumbling – the a6-pawn is hanging and c6 and d5 will also come under pressure. Black has no choice other than to aim for total mayhem.

22...g5! 23 fxg5

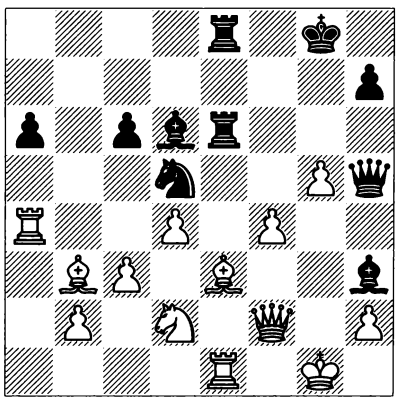
23 ♖xa6 is another option.

23...f4!

Black invests two more pawns to rip open the position. There are even situations where a fourth pawn will be offered with ...h6.

24 gxf4 ♗h3 *(D)*

W



Now White must be careful.

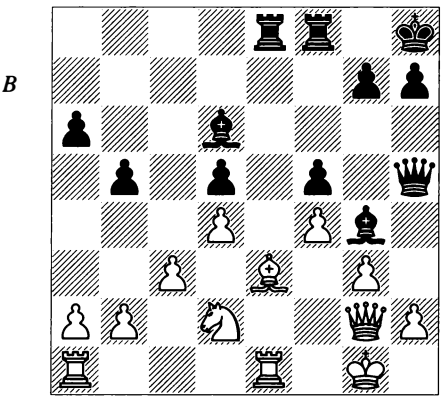
25 ♔h1

This may well be the best move, but White's next is a blunder.

25...♕g4 26 ♘f3? ♖xe3!

Black wins because the white queen is tied to the defence of the g2-square.

Exchange Sacrifice on e4



Anand – Topalov
Las Palmas 1993

White has exchanged pieces on d5 and played ♕g2. Black does not want to defend with the passive 21...♕f7, so he throws more wood on the fire.

21...♖e4

This is an attractive move. If White captures the rook, Black's light-square control will be accentuated. White will be an exchange and a pawn up, however.

22 h4!?

Anand prevents any ...♗h3 ideas before taking the exchange, but this weakens g3.

22...h6 23 ♘xe4 fxe4 24 ♖f1 ♖f6!

Black intends ...♖g6 with counterplay on the kingside.

The ...c5 Break

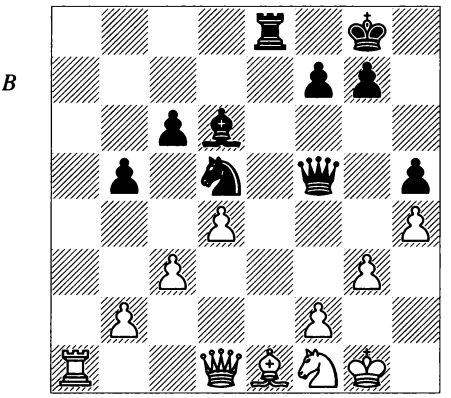
In the following diagram, White intends to play ♗d2 and ♘e3 to exchange another set of pieces, after which it will be difficult for Black to get any significant counterplay.

25...c5!

Black is more active, so he opens the position for his pieces.

26 b3

White prepares the c4 advance. After 26 ♗d2, Black can isolate White's d-pawn, which should give Black enough counterplay. Instead

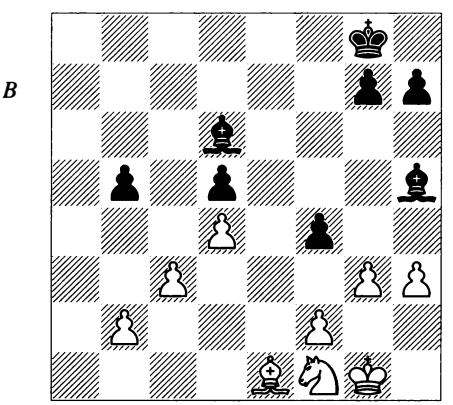


Chandler – Nunn
Hastings 1987/8

26 dxc5 ♗xc5 further activates Black's pieces and leaves White very passively placed.

Now the game continued 26...cxd4 27 ♕xd4 ♖e4 28 ♕d3 ♗c5 and here I think the quiet 29 ♔g2! would have enabled White to consolidate the extra pawn. Instead I suggest **26...♘f6!?**, when Black has good counterplay.

Two-Bishop Endgame



I. Gurevich – Benjamin
Reshevsky Memorial, New York 1992

Here we have a typical Marshall endgame. White has difficulty creating a passed pawn, and Black's space on the kingside keeps White at bay as well.

28...♗e2! 29 ♘h2

If White plays 29 gxf4 ♗xf4 his knight will only be able to move somewhere that will allow

Black to head for a drawn opposite-coloured bishop ending (30 ♗d2 ♗xf1! =).

29...♔f7 30 ♔g2 ♔f6 31 f3 h5!

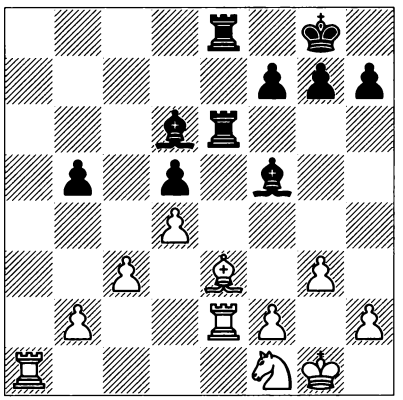
Taking away the g4-square.

32 g4 g6 33 ♘f1 hxg4 34 hxg4 g5 35 ♘d2 ♗d1

Preventing ♘b3.

36 ♔f2 ♔e6 37 ♔f1 ♔d7 38 ♗f2 ♗c7 39 ♔e1 ♗c2 40 ♔e2 ♗a5 41 ♗e1 ½-½

Two-Bishop Endgame with Rooks



del Rio – Hebden
Port Erin 2003

This ending has a similar structure but Black has to be careful because there are more pieces on the board.

24...b4

This looks active, but perhaps Black should wait with this and play 24...♗d3. As we shall see, this advance exposes the d5-pawn to a lateral attack by a white rook.

25 ♖ee1 bxc3 26 bxc3 ♖c8 27 ♗d2 ♗e4 28 ♖e3 h5 29 f3 ♗f5?

After this the d5-pawn just drops. 29...♗c2 was necessary, but Black will still suffer.

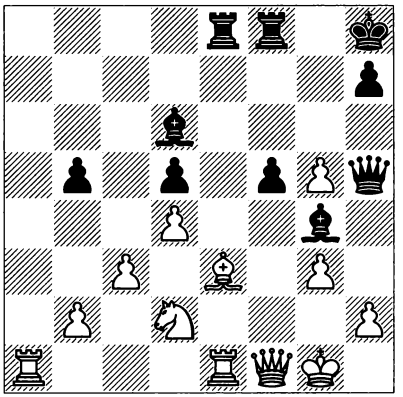
30 ♖a5

and White went on to win.

White Gives Back Material to Reach a Favourable Endgame

In the following position, Black has played the destructive ...g5 and now makes a further sacrifice to break down the dark squares.

23...♖xe3 24 ♖xe3 f4 25 gxf4 ♗xf4 26 ♖g3



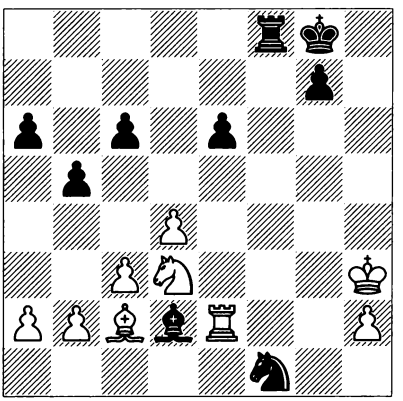
Timman – Nunn
Brussels 1988

White takes advantage of the pin along the f-file. He will soon give back all of the material in order to simplify the position.

26...♕xg5 27 ♔h1 ♗d6 28 ♕g2 ♗xg3 29 ♕xg3 h5 30 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 31 ♘xf1 ♕c1 32 ♔g1 ♕xb2 33 h3

White has reached a favourable ♕+♘ vs ♕+♗ ending and with accurate play he can create considerable problems for Black.

Black's Queenside is Weakened in the Endgame



Yakovenko – Bacrot
Dortmund 2009

Despite the simplifications and opposite-coloured bishops, White maintains an edge because Black's queenside pawns are vulnerable

to White's minor pieces. In this case, the e6-pawn is weak as well.

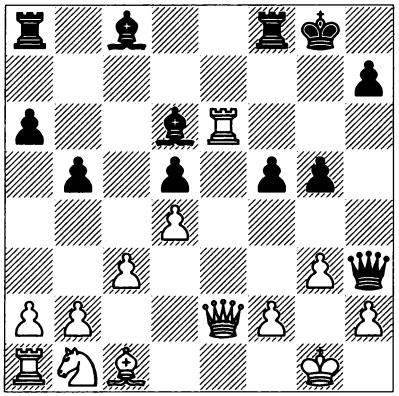
34...♖f6 35 ♘e5

35 ♘c5 is also tempting.

35...♗c1 36 ♘g4 ♖f3+ 37 ♔g2 ♖f4 38 ♗b3 ♖xg4+ 39 ♔xf1

White has won a pawn. Although it will not be easy to convert, Black is in for a long and miserable defence.

Fuelling the Initiative in the Endgame



Ponomariov – Anand
Linares 2002

In this famous game, White is trying to use tactics to defend his kingside. If Black takes on e6, White will win both of Black's bishops for the rook. Although some correspondence games have shown the capture on e6 to have some viability, from a theoretical standpoint Anand's brilliant sacrifice is sufficient.

18...f4!

Black gives up a whole piece to bring all of his remaining pieces into play!

19 ♖xd6 ♗g4 20 ♕f1 ♕xf1+!

Remarkably, Black can even afford to exchange queens.

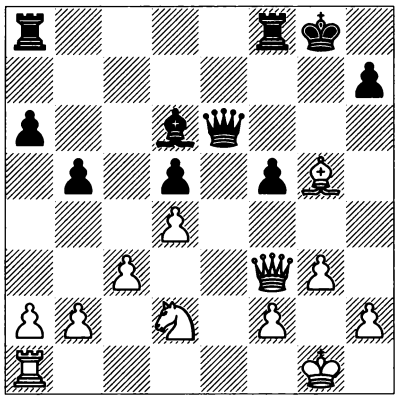
21 ♔xf1 ♖ae8 22 ♗d2 ♗h3+ 23 ♔g1 fxg3 24 hxg3 ♖e2 25 ♗e3 ♖xe3 26 fxe3 ♖f1+ 27 ♔h2 g4! 28 ♖xd5

28 ♘d2 ♖xa1 looks risky for White because of the activity of Black's pieces.

½-½

Black has perpetual check.

The 'Sveshnikov' Rook-Lift



Topalov – Adams
Sarajevo 2000

White has two pawns for the exchange and a sound pawn-structure. Adams finds a way to wrest the initiative.

21...f4!

Black offers a pawn to wreck White's pawn-structure and open lines for his own rooks.

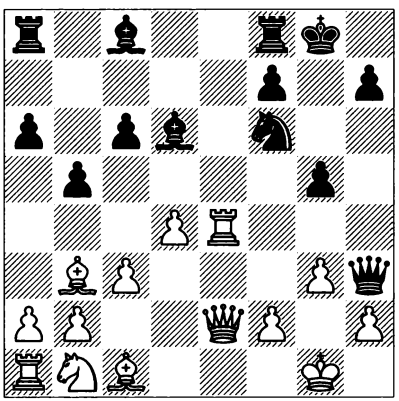
22 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 23 gxf4 ♖a7!

This is it! This manoeuvre is often seen in the Sveshnikov Sicilian, where Black has an open second rank, as he does here.

24 ♔h1 ♖e7 25 ♖g1+ ♔h8 26 ♘f1 ♕e4

Black maintains the initiative into the endgame and went on to win.

White's Exchange Sacrifice



Ponomariov – Adams
Linares 2002

White's centralized rook looks a bit awkward. White solves the problem of saving the rook by not saving it at all. This is justified because of the weaknesses of Black's kingside.

17 ♘d2! ♗f5

After 17...♘xe4 18 ♘xe4 the d6-bishop is attacked and the g5-pawn will fall, giving White two pawns for the exchange.

18 f3

Now if Black ever captures on e4, White will get a central pawn-roller. Sometimes Black can fight against these pawns effectively, but that is not the case here.

18...c5 19 ♕f2 c4 20 ♗c2 h6 21 b3 cxb3 22 axb3 ♖fc8 23 ♗b2

White is ready to advance his c-pawn, whereupon he will dominate the centre.

23...♗b4?

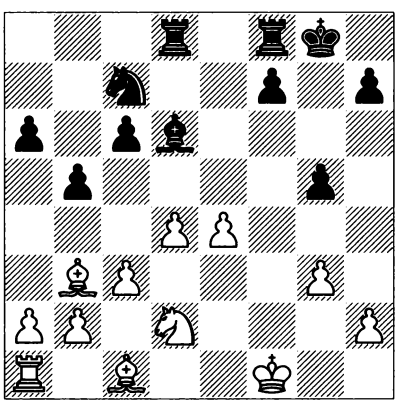
Black panics.

24 ♖e5 ♗xc2 25 cxb4 ♗g6 26 ♖c5 ♖e8 27 ♘f1 ♖ad8 28 d5!

White has a winning attack.

White's Exchange Sacrifice in the Endgame

W



Yakovenko – Zhang Zhong
China-Russia Summit Match, Ergun 2006

Even with the queens exchanged, White's central roller combined with the weaknesses in Black's structure can give White good chances.

21 a4!

Before starting operations on the kingside, White creates the possibility of opening the a-file.

21...h6 22 ♔g2 ♖d7 23 h4! gxh4 24 e5 ♗e7 25 gxh4 ♔g7

If 25...♗xh4 then 26 ♘f3 wins back the pawn.

26 axb5

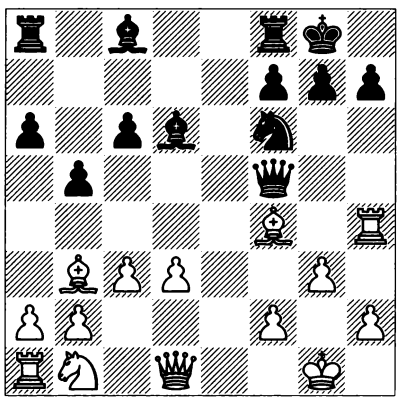
The immediate 26 ♘e4 was also possible.

26...axb5 27 ♘e4

The knight is heading to g3 and f5. White has a powerful initiative.

A Misplaced Rook

B



Ragger – Beliavsky
Graz 2008

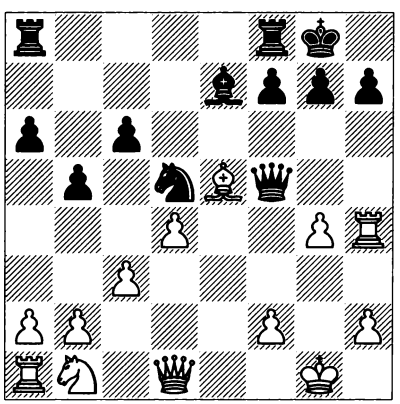
Here Black has no real kingside attack and development is level. However, White's 'active' rook is misplaced, and this allows Black to develop some initiative.

17...♗e7! 18 ♗c2 ♕g6 19 d4 ♗f5

Black is not opposed to this exchange because it helps his development.

20 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 21 ♗e5 ♘d5 22 g4 *(D)*

B

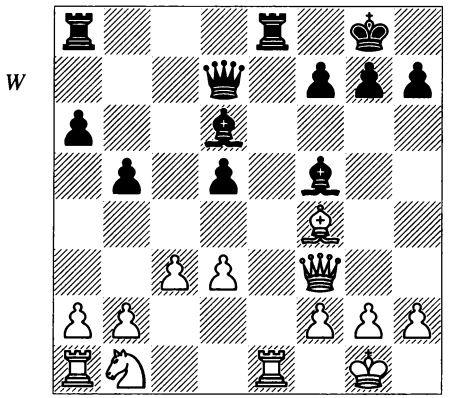


Frustrated, White lashes out, but this gives Black a clear target.

22...♕g6 23 ♖h3 f6 24 ♗g3 f5!

Black has a strong initiative.

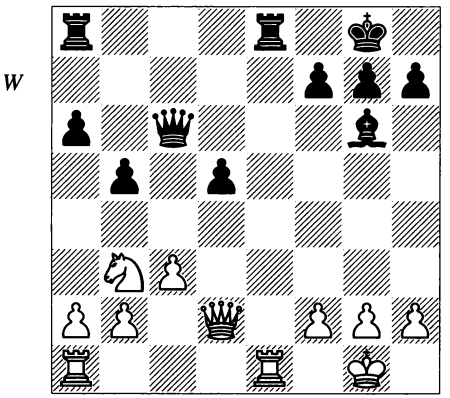
White Gives Back the Pawn to Exchange the Right Pieces



Fressinet – Hamdouchi
Belfort 2003

White's back rank is threatened and the d3-pawn is under attack. White returns the pawn to complete his development and reach a position with a superior pawn-structure and minor piece.

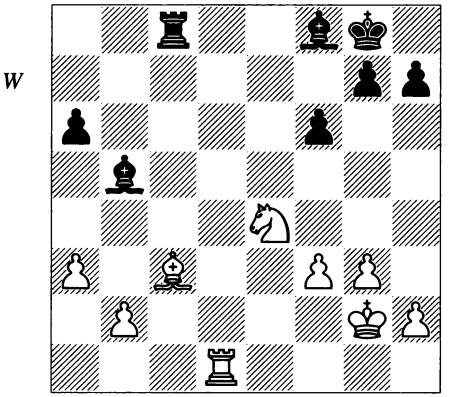
17 ♘d2! ♗xf4 18 ♕xf4 ♗xd3 19 ♘b3 ♕c6 20 ♕d2 ♗g6 *(D)*



21 ♘d4

With his strong knight on d4 and Black's inferior bishop, White has a long-lasting advantage.

The 'Elite Ending' Gone Wrong



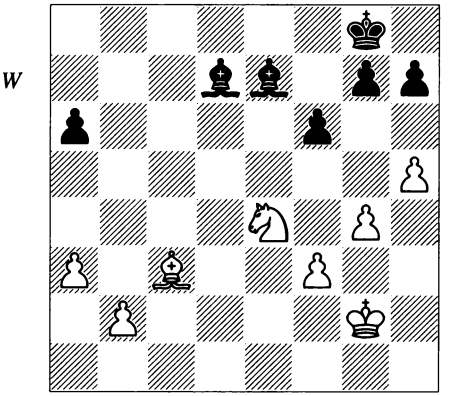
Shirov – Aronian
Morelia/Linares 2008

Here we have a typical ending from the 12 d3 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♗f5 line. In this case, Black has been careless and White grabs space on the kingside, looking to create a 'second weakness' in the black position (this first is White's extra pawn on the queenside).

30 g4! ♗c6 31 ♖d3 ♖e8 32 ♖d4 ♖b8 33 h4 ♗e7 34 h5

Further putting the squeeze on.

34...♖d8 35 ♖c4 ♗b5 36 ♖c7 ♖d7 37 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 *(D)*



38 h6!

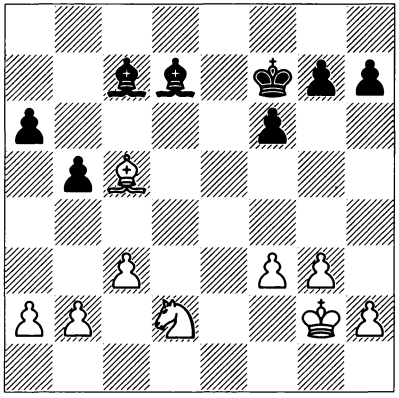
This breaks up Black's kingside and gives White a passed f-pawn.

38...gxh6 39 ♗xf6 ♗f8 40 ♗d4

With an extra pawn and the better position, White has a decisive advantage.

Holding the 'Elite Ending'

B



Bacrot – Aronian
European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008

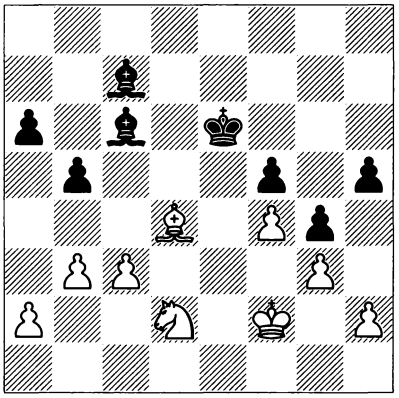
In this example, Black employs a typical method of active defence – he advances his kingside pawns.

29...h5!

Not only does this prevent White from gaining space on the kingside, it also will make him think twice before wandering over to the queenside, because White's own kingside pawns could become vulnerable to Black's strong bishops.

30 ♗d4 ♗c6 31 b3 f5 32 ♔f2 g5 33 ♗e3 g4 34 f4 ♔e6 35 ♗d4 *(D)*

B



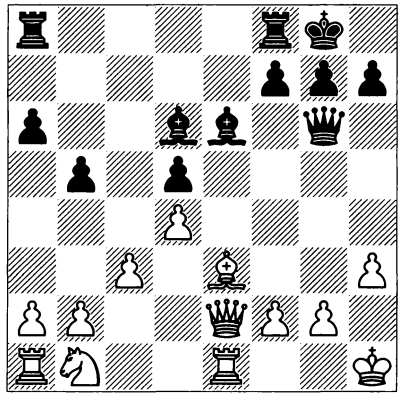
½-½

In view of the activity of Black's pieces, it is hard to see how White will ever be able to make any progress.

Black's Minority Attack on the Queenside

Sometimes White exchanges on d5 early on to reduce Black's attacking potential. When it is difficult for Black to create play on the kingside, he can look to the other side of the board.

B



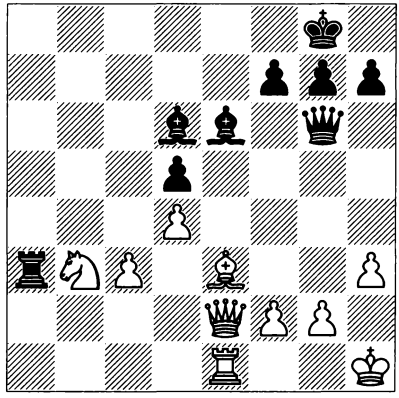
de Firmian – Sargisian
Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 2007

21...♖fc8

Black prepares to play on the queenside.

22 a3 a5 23 ♘d2 b4 24 axb4 axb4 25 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 26 ♘b3 bxc3 27 bxc3 ♖a3 *(D)*

W



White's extra pawn is backward and Black has the bishop-pair. White played...

28 ♘c5

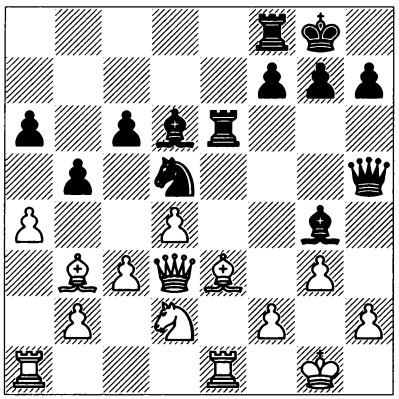
...and offered a draw.

½-½

Part 1: Main Lines with 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3

1 Spassky Variation

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4 ♕h5 *(D)*

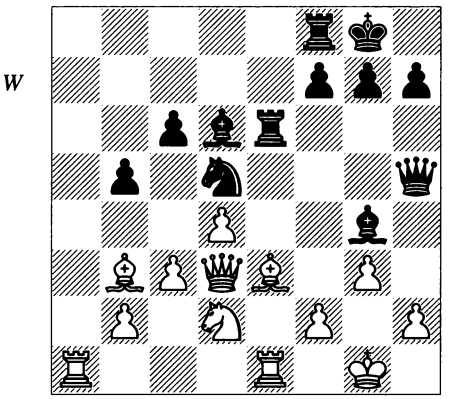


Black meets White's threat to destroy the queenside with 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 ♕xb5 by protecting the d5-knight. This is less brutal than the pawn-pushing variations of the next chapter. Instead of forcing matters by launching the f-pawn and creating a kind of self-pin on the a2-g8 diagonal, Black relies on more positional means. Usually Black will follow with ...♖fe8, but pushing the f-pawn is still a possibility in several lines, especially if White retreats his light-squared bishop with ♗d1 because there will be no pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal. This has become the main line of the Marshall with 15 ♗e3 and is favoured by all of the elite players who employ the Marshall Attack with the black pieces.

19 axb5

White opens the a-file for his rook. There is no reason to delay this move, and doing so can only harm White, because there could be some positions where White may not have time to transpose back to known lines. For example, if White decides later on that the time is right to play axb5 intending to meet ...axb5 with ♖a6, it is possible that Black will have a stronger move than ...axb5, especially as he will be playing against White's king.

19...axb5 *(D)*



Black is ready to increase the pressure by doubling rooks. White has four main options, of which the last two are the most important:

A:	**20 ♗xd5**	21
B:	**20 ♘e4**	21
C:	**20 ♘f1**	22
D:	**20 ♕f1**	26

Other moves are not dangerous at all:

a) 20 ♗d1? allows a typical idea: 20...♘xe3 (20...♗xd1 21 ♖axd1 f5 22 ♘f1 f4 23 ♗c1 ♖ef6 was also overwhelming in Hellers-I.Sokolov, Haninge 1989, but this is even stronger) 21 fxe3 ♗xg3! 22 hxg3 ♖h6! is just winning for Black.

b) 20 c4 and now:

b1) 20...♘xe3?! 21 ♖xe3 (again 21 fxe3? loses to 21...♗xg3 22 hxg3 ♖h6) 21...♗e2 22 ♕c3 (22 ♕c2?! ♖xe3! 23 fxe3 ♕h6 24 ♕e4 ♗b4 gives Black good play) 22...b4 23 ♕c1 ♖h6 24 h4 g5 25 ♕e1 ♗g4 26 f3 ♗c8 27 c5 ♗b8 28 ♖e8 gxh4 29 ♕e7 ♖xe8 30 ♕xe8+ ♔g7 31 ♕xc8 hxg3 32 ♕g4+ was winning for White in Grünfeld-Pein, Tel Aviv 1990.

b2) 20...bxc4 is the simplest. 21 ♘xc4 ♗b4 22 ♖ec1 ♗e2 23 ♗d1 ♗xd3 24 ♗xh5 ♗xc4 25 ♖xc4 ♘xe3 26 fxe3 ♗d2 ½-½ Parma-Geller, Capablanca Memorial, Havana 1971.

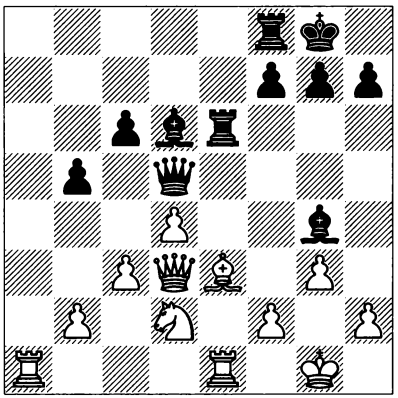
A)

20 ♗xd5

It does not seem terribly logical to make this exchange now that Black can recapture with the queen.

20...♕xd5 *(D)*

W



21 c4

21 ♕f1 ♖fe8 is considered under Line D1, while 21 b3 does not look too threatening. Both 21...♕h5 22 c4 ♗b4 and 21...♗h3 22 f3 ♗f5 23 ♕f1 ♗c2 24 c4 ♕f5 offer Black enough play for the pawn.

21...bxc4 22 ♕xc4

Not 22 ♘xc4? ♗h3.

22...♖b8!?

22...♕h5 is almost always played, but after 23 ♖a6 ♖fe8 24 ♖xc6 ♖h6 25 h4 ♖g6 26 ♕a6! ♕d5 27 ♖b6! White was much better in Piculjan-Bendana, corr. 2003. Therefore I recommend the text-move, which looks like it should give Black sufficient play.

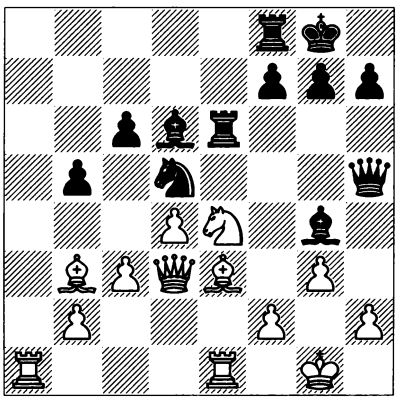
23 ♖a6 ♗f8 24 b3 ♗h3

It is not going to be easy for White to undertake anything active after either 25 ♕xd5 cxd5 or 25 f3 ♖be8.

B)

20 ♘e4 *(D)*

B



White is not willing simply to defend on the kingside, so he tries to fight for the initiative immediately. It looks rather strange to walk into a pin, however.

20...♗f5!

This equalizes pretty cleanly. Matters are less clear after 20...♗c7?! 21 ♗d2 ♖fe8:

a) 22 ♘c5? ♖xe1+ 23 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 24 ♗xe1 ♘f4! 25 gxf4 ♗xf4 26 h4 was Anand-Kamsky, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 1994. Here Black should have played 26...♕xh4! 27 ♕e4 ♕h2+ 28 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 29 ♕g2 ♗e2+ 30 ♔g1 ♗h2+ 31 ♔h1 (or 31 ♕xh2 ♕f1#) 31...♗f3 32 ♕xf3 ♕xf3+ 33 ♔xh2 ♕e2, winning.

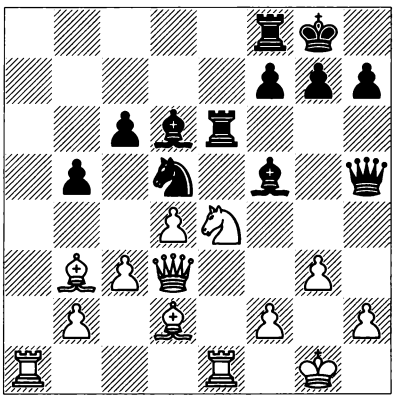
b) 22 ♗d1! ♗xd1 23 ♖exd1 (if we compare this to Line C it is clear that White's pieces are much more active) 23...f5 24 ♘g5 ♖e2 25 ♕xf5! (worse is 25 ♘f3? ♖8e3! with counterchances, Anand-Kamsky, FIDE Candidates match (game 1), Sanghi Nagar 1994) and here neither 25...♖f8 26 ♕h3! ♕g6 27 ♕g4 ♖ee8 28 f3 nor 25...♘f6 26 ♕f3 ♕xf3 27

♘xf3 ♘e4 28 ♗c1 is sufficient for Black. Therefore, 20...♗c7 should be avoided.

21 ♗d2 *(D)*

My computer recommends the mysterious move 21 ♗c1!?, but this can be met in the same way.

B



21...♖xe4! 22 ♖xe4 ♘f6 23 f3 ♕g6 24 ♕f1

24 ♖ae1 is met by 24...♗xg3!, while after 24 ♕e3 Black can play either 24...♘xe4 25 fxe4 ♗xe4 = or 24...♗xg3 25 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 26 ♔f1 (26 ♔h1 ♕h3+ =) 26...♕h2! 27 ♗c1 ♕h1+ 28 ♔e2 ♘xe4 29 fxe4 ♗g4+, when Black has at least a perpetual check.

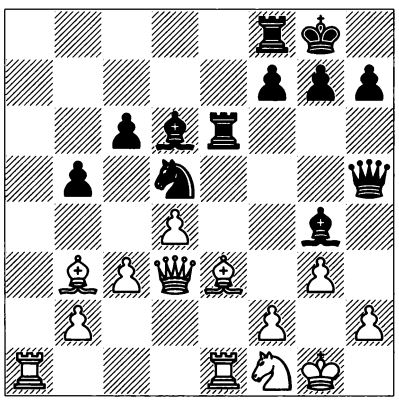
24...♘xe4 25 fxe4 ♗xe4 26 ♗f4 ♗d3 27 ♕f2 ♗xf4 28 ♕xf4 h6 29 ♕f2 ♖e8 30 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 31 ♕xe1 ♗e4 32 ♕f2

The position is equal and Svidler-Kamsky, Groningen 1995 was drawn here.

C)

20 ♘f1 *(D)*

B



This is a typical idea. White prepares to simplify with ♗d2 and ♘e3, when Black will have nothing at all to show for his pawn. Black has a choice of how to try to disturb White:

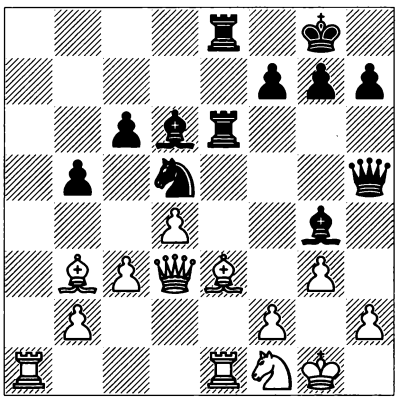
C1: 20...♖fe8 22
C2: 20...♗f5 24

Black should avoid 20...f5? 21 ♗f4! (this surprising resource comes up a lot when Black has self-pinned with ...f5; also possible is the computer's suggestion 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 ♕xb5 ♗f3 23 ♘d2 f4 24 ♗xf4 ♖xe1+ 25 ♖xe1 ♗xf4 26 ♘xf3 ♕xf3 27 gxf4 ♕g4+ 28 ♔f1 but the text-move is simpler). Even though White's pawns on the kingside become damaged, the simplifications favour White. After 21...♖xe1 22 ♖xe1 ♗xf4 23 gxf4 ♗f3 24 ♘g3 ♕g4 25 ♖e3 ♗e4 26 f3! ♗xd3 27 ♗xd5+ cxd5 28 fxg4, as given by Nunn, White has a winning ending.

C1)

20...♖fe8 *(D)*

W



Black doubles on the e-file and in doing so prevents White's consolidation plans because 21 ♗d2? runs into 21...♗f5!, when White's queen suddenly has no squares.

21 ♗d1

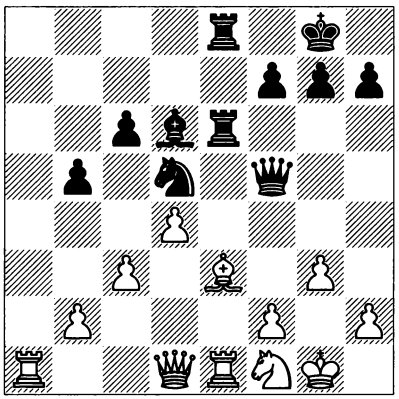
This is a typical retreat. White wants to exchange pieces. However, because there is no pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal any more, both the d5-knight and e6-rook are free to move about and an advance of the f-pawn is also less risky.

21...♗xd1 22 ♕xd1

Worse is 22 ♖axd1?! ♕f3, when White is tangled up. 23 ♕e2 ♕e4 24 ♘d2 (or 24 ♕d2 ♕f5) 24...♕c2 gives Black good play.

22...♕f5 *(D)*

W



Black still has pressure on the e-file and the possibility of pestering White by advancing the h-pawn. Nunn considers that although Black should be able to hold the balance, White is the only one with real winning chances if he plays carefully. However, it is not so easy for White to play carefully and make progress at the same time if Black plays with sufficient energy.

23 ♗d2

After 23 ♖a6 Nunn suggested 23...h5! 24 ♖xc6 h4, which has since been tried in practice. 25 ♗d2 and here:

a) 25...♖xe1 26 ♗xe1 h3 27 f3 ♗f8 28 ♖a6 b4 29 ♖a5? (A.Sokolov-Hellers, Reykjavik 1990) and now Black could have played 29...♘xc3!.

b) With 25...h3!?, instead of trading rooks, Black increases the tension on the kingside by creating threats around the white king. After 26 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 27 ♘e3 (27 f3 ♕d3!) 27...♘xe3 28 ♗xe3 ♕e4 29 ♖c8+ ♗f8 30 ♔f1 ♖a6! (not 30...♕g2+? 31 ♔e2 ♕xh2 32 d5 and 33 ♗c5 is coming) the threat of 31...♖a1! forced White into 31 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 32 ♔e2 in Metz-Õim, corr. 1988. Clearly Black is the one playing for a win here.

23...♖xe1

The immediate 23...h5!? is also possible.

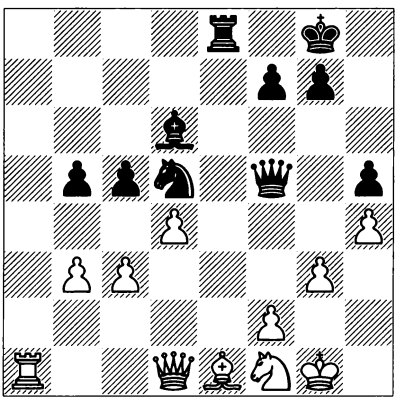
24 ♗xe1 h5 25 h4 c5

Again, Black must take steps to interfere with White's plan of ♗d2 and ♘e3. The point of this advance is that after 26 ♗d2 White will get an isolated pawn on d4, and taking on c5 may open the position more than White would like. Instead 25...g6 26 b3 b4 27 c4 ♘c3 28 ♗xc3 bxc3 29 c5 c2 30 ♕d2 ♗c7 31 ♖c1 ♕f3 32 ♖xc2 (32 ♕xc2 ♖e2) 32...♕xb3 33 ♕c3 ♕d5 34 ♕c4 ♕e4 35 ♖d2 was Gashimov-Shirov, Poikovsky 2008. Even here, it should not be easy for White to convert his extra pawn, although he managed to do so after some over-optimistic play from his opponent.

26 b3 *(D)*

White prepares the possibility of c4 to kick Black's knight. After 26 ♔g2 cxd4 27 ♕xd4 (27 cxd4 ♕g6 28 ♕f3 ♘f4+ 29 ♔h2 ♘d3 also gives Black good play) 27...♗c5! 28 ♕d1 both 28...♖e5 and 28...♘f6 give Black good play for the pawn. It is difficult for White to untangle his pieces.

B



26...♘f6!?

This looks like a good try. Other moves look less trustworthy:

a) 26...g6 was suggested by Nunn. This is a typical positional move that controls the light squares, protects the h5-pawn and gives Black's king a little more breathing room. Nunn gives 27 c4 bxc4 28 bxc4 ♘f6, continuing 29 d5 ♘g4 intending ...♘e5 with counterplay. However, White may improve with 29 ♖a6!?, which disturbs Black's coordination and may cause some slight problems.

b) 26...cxd4 27 ♕xd4 ♖e4 28 ♕d3 ♗c5 and now 29 ♖a8+ ♔h7 30 ♖e8? ♘xc3! was Chandler-Nunn, Hastings 1987/8. Nunn suggests 29 c4!, continuing 29...bxc4 30 bxc4 ♘f6 31 ♔g2, but Black can avoid this with 29...♘b4!, when Black will be able to take on c4 or maybe play ...♕f3. Of course, 30 ♗xb4??

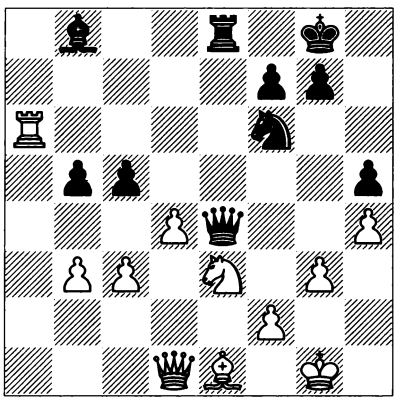
is impossible because of 30...♕xf2+. White can try 29 ♔g2! though, when he is ready to start pushing Black back.

27 ♖a6 ♗b8 28 ♘e3

After 28 dxc5 ♕xc5 White is very passive, so Black's compensation looks sufficient for the pawn.

28...♕e4 *(D)*

W



29 dxc5

29 ♘g2 can be answered rather simply with 29...cxd4 30 cxd4 ♖d8.

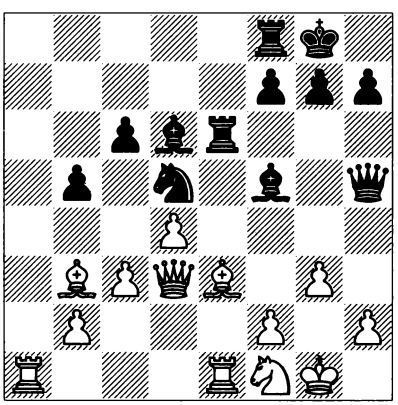
29...♗xg3!

Black has good chances.

C2)

20...♗f5 *(D)*

W



This move is the modern choice. Black is going to chase the white queen to d2 to interfere with White's plan of ♗d2 and ♘e3. White can lure Black's bishop back to g4 before going to d2 or he can play 21 ♕d2 straightaway – or he can repeat the position, which may be seen as a practical drawback of this line for Black. We have:

C21: 21 ♕d1 24
C22: 21 ♕d2 25

Note that 21 ♕e2 ♗g4 will either repeat the position or transpose to Line C21 after 22 ♕d2.

C21)

21 ♕d1

White still wants to play ♕d2 but prefers to lure Black's bishop to g4 first.

21...♗g4 22 ♕d2 ♕h3 23 ♗d1

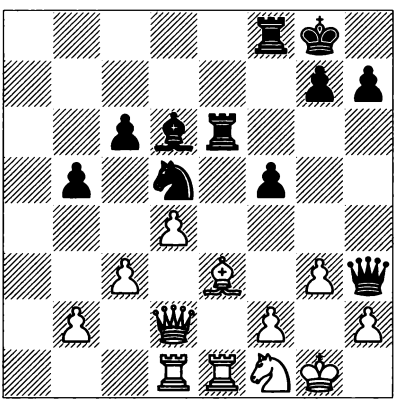
White is a bit tangled up, so he seeks simplifications. 23 f4 is well met by 23...♖fe8.

23...♗xd1 24 ♖axd1

Black has good compensation after 24 ♕xd1 f5! 25 ♗d2 ♖g6 (or 25...♖xe1 26 ♗xe1 f4) 26 ♕f3 f4 27 ♕g2 ♕d7.

24...f5 *(D)*

W



When there is no pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal, this move should be the first one Black looks at. The threat of ...f4 induces White's reaction.

25 f4

Now Black secures good play on the light squares.

25...♖fe8

This is a positional approach. The brutal 25...g5 is also good enough:

a) 26 fxg5 f4 27 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 28 gxf4 ♘xf4 29 ♘g3 ♕g4 30 ♖xe6 ♘h3+ 31 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 32 ♔g1 ♘h3+ 33 ♔g2 ½-½ Ljubojević-Nikolić, Belgrade 1991.

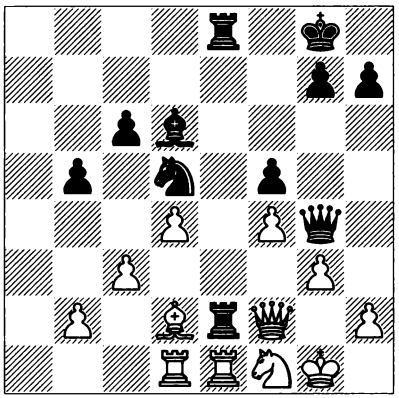
b) 26 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ 27 ♔xg2 ♖fe8 28 ♗d2 ♖xe1 29 ♖xe1 ♖xe1 30 ♗xe1 gxf4 31 ♔f3 fxg3 32 hxg3 ♔f7 = Karpov-Short, Tilburg 1991.

26 ♕f2

After 26 ♗f2 ♕g4 the f4-pawn will fall.

26...♕g4 27 ♗d2 ♖e2! *(D)*

W



This is a common idea. Black inches into White's position.

28 h3 ♕h5 29 g4 ♕xh3

Also sufficient is 29...♖xe1 30 ♖xe1 (not 30 gxh5? ♖xd1 ∓) 30...fxg4 31 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 32 hxg4 ♕e4 =.

30 ♖xe2 ♕xg4+ 31 ♘g3 ♖xe2 32 ♕xe2 ♕xg3+ 33 ♔h1 ♕h3+ 34 ♔g1

White cannot play 34 ♕h2? ♕f3+.

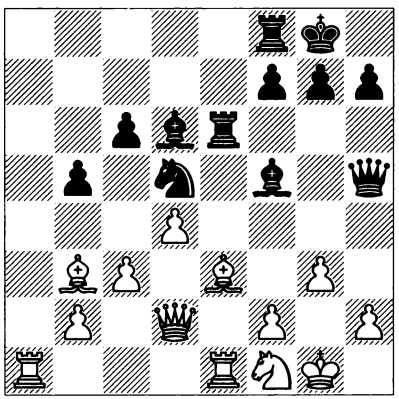
34...♕g3+

After 35 ♕g2 ♕d3! Black is not worse, so White has nothing better than to repeat.

C22)

21 ♕d2 *(D)*

B



White leaves well enough alone and places his queen on a square where it cannot be harassed.

21...♖fe8

Black can also try a couple of other moves:

a) 21...♗h3!? is a recent try from Aronian. This worked surprisingly well in Shirov-Aronian, Bilbao 2009: 22 ♗d1 ♕g6 23 ♗f3 ♕f5 24 ♗h1 ♖fe8 25 ♖e2?! h5 26 ♕c2 ♕g4 27 ♖ee1 h4 28 ♕d1 ♕f5 29 ♕f3? ♕g6! 0-1. An odd-looking resignation perhaps, but 30...♗g4 31 ♕g2 h3 is threatened and White gets demolished after 30 ♕e2 hxg3 31 hxg3 ♘xe3 32 ♘xe3 ♗xg3! −+ or 30 ♕d1 hxg3 31 hxg3 ♘xe3 32 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 33 fxe3 ♗xf1 34 ♔xf1 ♖xe3 −+.

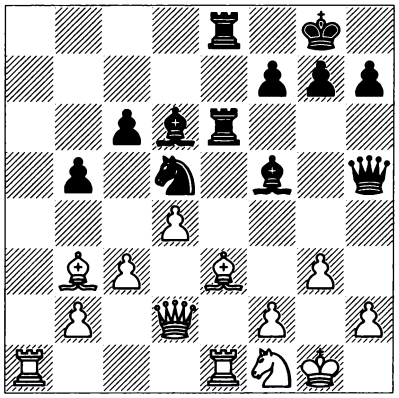
b) 21...♗e4 and here:

b1) 22 ♗c2 and now 22...f5!? was suggested by Pavlović. After 23 ♗d1 ♕h3 24 f3 f4 25 fxe4 fxg3! Black has serious counterplay. A simpler idea is 22...♗f3 23 ♗d1 ♖fe8 24 ♗xf3 ♕xf3 intending ...h5 and ...♘f6 and Black looks fine.

b2) 22 ♗d1 ♕f5 (22...♕h3 and 22...♕g6 are also possible) 23 ♕e2 ♘f6 24 ♘d2 ♗d5 25 b3 c5 26 dxc5 ♗xc5 27 ♕xb5. Black drew with very exact play after 27...♗xe3 28 fxe3 ♘e4 29 ♖f1 ♕e5 30 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 31 ♖f3 ♖d6 32 ♗e2 ♕e7 33 e4 ♕xe4 34 ♕d3 ♕e6 35 ♖e3 ♕h3 36 ♗f1 ♕h6 37 ♕e2 ♗xb3 = in Eiben-Moreira, corr. 2006. This may be alright in correspondence play, but over the board Black would have to make a lot of 'only' moves to hold the balance.

We now return to the position arising after 21...♖fe8 *(D)*:

W



22 ♗xd5

22 ♗c2 ♗h3 23 ♕d1 ♗g4 24 ♕d3 ♕h3 25 ♗d2 ♖e2 26 ♖xe2 ♗xe2 27 ♖e1 ♗xd3 28 ♖xe8+ ♗f8 29 ♗xd3 ♕d7 30 ♖e1 was agreed drawn in Svidler-Yakovenko, Foros 2008, while 22 ♗d1 ♕g6 23 ♗f3 has been tried a few times in correspondence games. 23...♗e4, 23...h5 and even 23...h6!? all offer Black reasonable play.

22...cxd5 23 ♕e2

White gets nowhere with 23 ♗f4 ♖xe1 24 ♖xe1 ♖xe1 25 ♕xe1 ♗e4 26 ♘d2 ♗xf4 27 ♘xe4 dxe4 28 gxf4 ♕g4+ 29 ♔f1 ½-½ Ivanchuk-I.Sokolov, Biel 1989.

23...♕xe2

Black would like to play 23...♗g4 24 ♕xb5 ♖b8, but this fails to 25 ♕a5! with the point 25...♖xb2? 26 ♕d8+ ♗f8 27 ♖a8. However, the simple 23...♕h3 is also possible, with the idea 24 f3 b4 with counterplay.

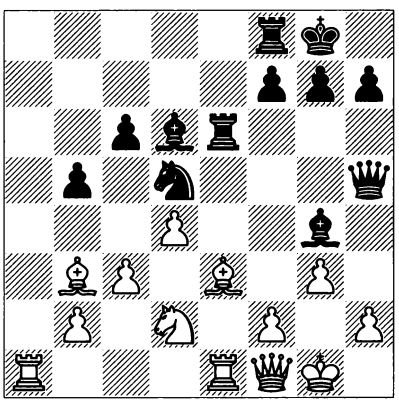
24 ♖xe2 b4

I suspect Black should be able to hold this typical Marshall endgame, but achieving a draw is not automatic. After 25 ♖ee1 bxc3 26 bxc3 ♖c8 27 ♗d2 ♗e4 28 ♖e3 h5?! 29 f3 ♗f5? 30 ♖a5 White won the d5-pawn and the game in del Rio-Hebden, Port Erin 2003.

D)

20 ♕f1 *(D)*

B



This is another common way of bolstering the kingside. In recent years this has been the most popular move amongst the world's elite players. Black has a choice:

D1: 20...♖fe8 26
D2: 20...♗h3 28

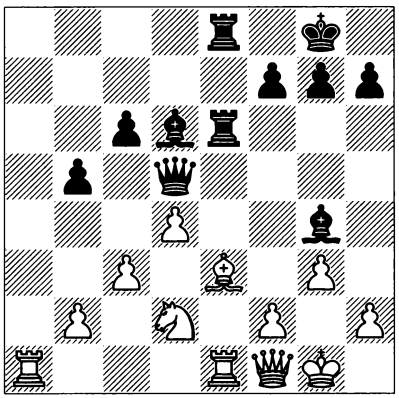
D1)

20...♖fe8

The increasing pressure on the e3-bishop forces White's response.

21 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 *(D)*

W

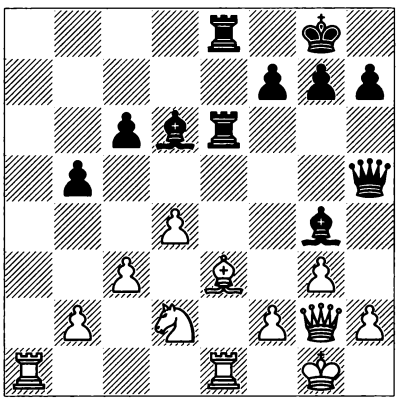


22 h3

This is the choice of the top players, but it does not lead to much. 22 f3 ♗h5 23 ♕f2 ♗g6 makes it difficult for White to come up with a plan, while 22 c4 gives Black a choice between 22...♕f5 and Nunn's suggestion 22...bxc4, which both look fine for Black.

22 ♕g2 is a common move. As Nunn points out, after 22...♕h5 *(D)* Black's queen is well placed, while the same cannot be said of White's. Some examples:

W



a) 23 f3 ♗h3 24 ♕f2 f5 (or 24...♗f5 intending ...♗d3 with counterplay) 25 f4 g5 (25...♗g4 stopping ♘f3 is another idea) 26 fxg5 f4 27 ♗xf4 ♖xe1+ 28 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 29 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 30

gxf4 ♕g4+ 31 ♔f2 ♕h4+ ½-½ Tiemann-Elburg, corr. 2002.

b) 23 ♖a6 f5 (23...♗h3 24 ♕f3 ♗g4 is also possible because 25 ♕h1 f5 does not look very appetizing for White) 24 d5 ♖h6 and here:

b1) 25 f3 ♗h3 26 ♕f2 f4 27 ♗d4 ♖xe1+ 28 ♕xe1 ♗c8! 29 ♖a8 ♕xh2+ 30 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 31 ♔e2 cxd5 ∓ Readers of *Prisyv*-Estrin, corr. 1982.

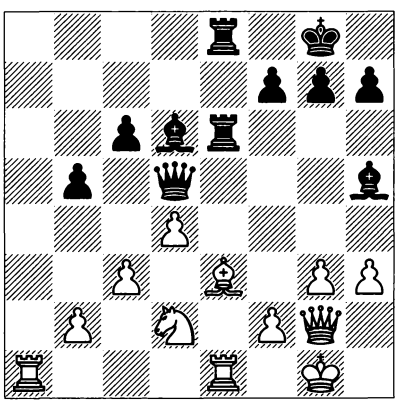
b2) 25 f4 ♗xf4!? (or 25...♗c5 26 ♘f1 ♗f3 27 ♕d2 ♗f8 28 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 29 dxc6 ♗xc6 with compensation) 26 gxf4 (not 26 ♘f1 ♗f3 27 ♕d2 ♗xe3+ 28 ♖xe3 ♗xd5 ∓) 26...♗h3 27 ♕g3 (27 ♕f2 ♖g6+ 28 ♔h1 ♗g2+ 29 ♕xg2 ♖xg2 30 ♔xg2 ♕g4+ 31 ♔f2 {31 ♔h1 ♖xe3} 31...♕h4+ 32 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 33 ♔f2 ♕xh2+ ∓) 27...♖g6 28 ♖xc6 ♖xg3+ 29 hxg3 ♕f7 30 ♖c5 ♕g6 31 ♔f2 ♗g4 gave Black the initiative in an unclear position in T.Olafsson-Harding, corr. 2001.

22...♗h5

Black can also play 22...♗f5 23 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ (or 23...h5!? 24 ♕xd5 cxd5 25 ♔g2 h4 26 g4 ♗c2 with compensation, Bergmann-Sakai, corr. 2003) 24 ♔xg2 ♖6e7 25 b3 f6 26 ♖a2 ♗e6 27 c4 ♗b4 28 ♖c1 ♗f5 29 g4 ♗d3 when he had some compensation in Leko-Kasimdzhanov, Linares 2005. White can push for a while, but these types of endings are difficult to win.

23 ♕g2 *(D)*

B

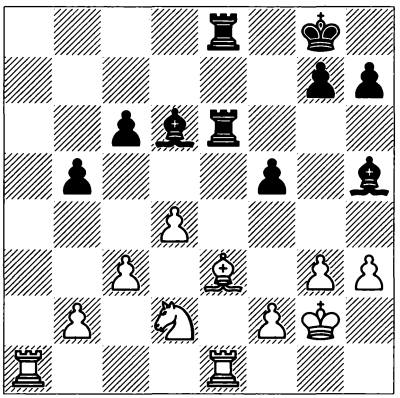


23...♕xg2+

This is a bit of a pre-emptive improvement. After 23...f5 24 ♕xd5 cxd5 White can play 25 ♖a5! (25 ♘f1 f4 26 ♗d2 ♖xe1 27 ♖xe1 ♖xe1 28 ♗xe1 ♗e2 29 ♘h2 ♔f7 30 ♔g2 ♔f6 31 f3 h5 32 g4 g6 33 ♘f1 hxg4 34 hxg4 g5, as played in I.Gurevich-Benjamin, Reshevsky Memorial, New York 1992, is a typical ending that White will not ever win) 25...♗xg3 26 fxg3 ♖xe3 27 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 28 ♘f1 ♖e2 29 g4! (29 ♖xb5? ♗f3), with a big advantage for White, is given by Gershon and Nor.

24 ♔xg2 f5 *(D)*

W



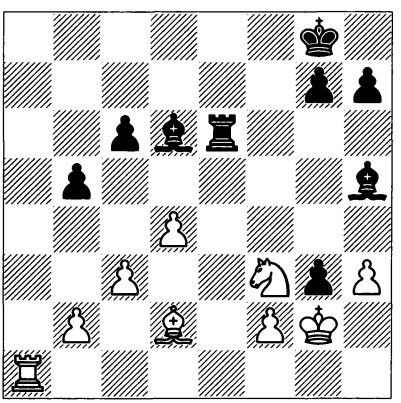
25 ♘f3

25 ♖a6 f4 26 gxf4 ♗xf4 27 ♗xf4 ♖xe1 28 ♖xc6 is the only try for an advantage but it is not completely without risks.

25 ♖g1!? is an odd-looking move. Pavlović gives 25...♖f6! (with ideas such as ...f4 and ...♗f7-d5+) 26 ♘b3 ♗f7 27 ♘c5 ♗d5+ 28 ♔h2 f4 29 gxf4 ♗xf4+ 30 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 31 ♘d3 ♖ff8 32 ♖a7 g6 with sufficient compensation for the pawn.

25...f4 26 ♗d2 fxg3 27 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 *(D)*

W



28 ♖a8+

Not 28 fxg3? ♖e2+. Now Black wins back the pawn and a sterile equality results.

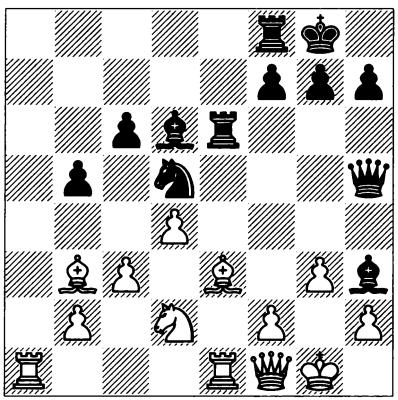
28...♗f8 29 ♘e5 gxf2 30 ♔xf2 ♖e8 31 ♖a6 ♗d6 32 ♗f4 ♗xe5 33 ♗xe5 ♖e6

The position is equal and the game J.Polgar-Adams, World Ch, San Luis 2005 was drawn here.

D2)

20...♗h3 *(D)*

W



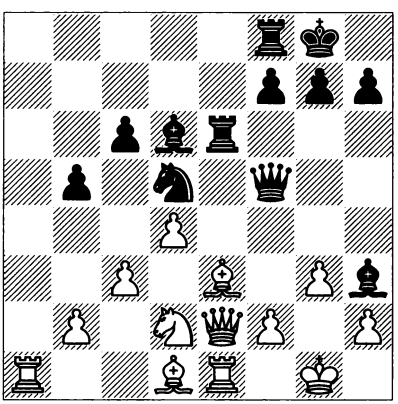
This is the most obvious and direct move.

21 ♗d1

This counterattack is a typical tactical resource to disturb Black's play. Instead 21 ♕e2 ♗g4 just invites a repetition of moves.

21...♕f5 22 ♕e2 *(D)*

B



22...c5

This is the choice of the world's top players. Alternatives:

a) 22...♘f4?! 23 ♕f3 ♕g6 24 ♗b3 (24 ♗e2?! ♘xe2+ 25 ♕xe2 ♗f5 with compensation) 24...♗g2 (24...♗g4 25 ♕xc6) 25 ♕d1 ♗d5 26 ♗xf4 ♖xe1+ 27 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 28 ♗xd5 cxd5 29 ♘f3 ± is given by Nunn.

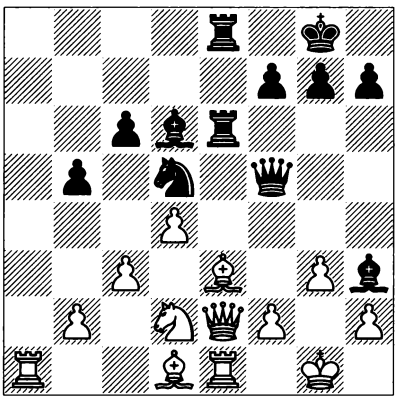
b) 22...♗f4?! gives White two good options:

b1) 23 ♕f3 ♗xe3 (23...♖fe8 24 gxf4 ♖g6+ 25 ♔h1 ♗g4 {or 25...♗g2+ 26 ♕xg2 ♖xg2 27 ♔xg2 +–} 26 ♕e4! +– is given by Nunn) 24 ♕xf5 (24 fxe3 ♕d3!?) 24...♗xf5 25 fxe3 ♘xe3 26 ♗f3 and White still has pressure.

b2) 23 ♘f1 ♗xf1 24 ♖xf1 ♘xe3 25 fxe3 ♗xe3+ 26 ♔g2 ♕d5+ 27 ♕f3 ♕xf3+ 28 ♗xf3 b4 29 d5 cxd5 30 ♗xd5 ♖e7 31 cxb4 ♗d4 was Fumero Sanchez-Hayden, corr. 1991. White could now play 32 b5 ±.

c) 22...♖fe8!? *(D)*.

W



Harding says this "completely equalizes", but the elite all play 22...c5 instead... This is still Black's best alternative to 22...c5 and could use more tests.

c1) After 23 ♘f3 ♘f4! the knight will come to d3, while 23 ♘f1 c5 24 ♗c2 ♘xc3 25 bxc3 ♕d5 26 f3 ♗xf1 27 ♕xf1 ♖xe3 28 ♗e4 was drawn here in Herbrechtsmeier-Õim, corr. 1988 because after 28...♖xe1 29 ♖xe1 ♕b3 30 ♗xh7+ ♔f8 31 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 Black will have no problems holding.

c2) 23 ♕f3 ♘xe3?! (Black could instead try 23...♕d3!?) 24 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 25 fxe3 ♕d3 26 ♕e2 ♕xe3+ 27 ♕xe3 ♖xe3 was agreed drawn here in Hauptmann-Moros, corr. 1976, but after 28 ♖a8+ ♗f8 29 ♔f2 ♖e6 30 ♗f3 the queenside looks hard to defend.

23 ♘f3

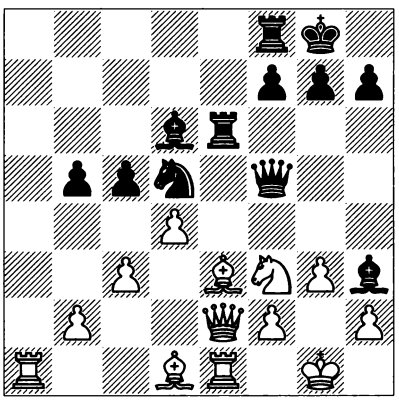
This is not the only move, but it is probably the most testing continuation. Other possibilities:

a) 23 ♘f1 presents Black with no problems: 23...cxd4 24 cxd4 ♘b4 25 ♖a3 ♘c6! 26 ♖d3 ♗b4 27 d5 ♖d6 28 ♗d2 ♖xd5 29 ♗xb4 ♘xb4, Sax-I.Sokolov, Haninge 1989.

b) 23 ♘b3 is rare, but Black should be prepared for it. 23...♘f4! (this will end up winning the white queen but Black should not relax just yet) 24 ♕f3 ♗g2 25 ♕g4 ♕d5 26 gxf4 ♖g6 27 ♕xg6 fxg6 28 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 29 dxc5 and now 29...♗h3 30 f3 g5? (30...♖e8! keeps the game in the balance) 31 ♗d4 ♖xf4 32 ♖e5 ♕c4 33 ♗e2 ♕b3 34 ♖e7 ♔f8 35 ♖b7 1-0 was L.Mauro-A.Coscia, corr. 1996. Instead 29...♗h1 30 ♗b3 (30 f3 ♗xf3) 30...♕xb3 31 ♔xh1 was given by Van der Tak, continuing 31...♕xb2 32 ♗d4 b4 33 ♖a7 ♖d8 34 ♖xg7+ ♔f8 35 ♖xh7 ♖xd4 36 cxd4 ♕xf2 =, and 31...h5!? is also possible if Black wants to try to win.

We now return to 23 ♘f3 *(D)*:

B



23...♗f4

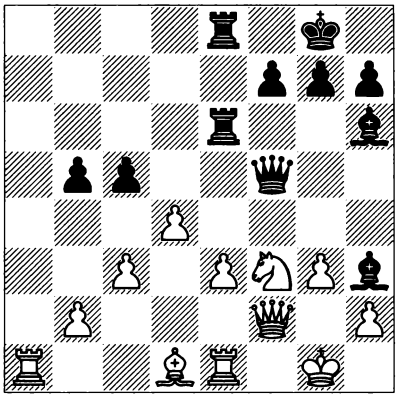
This is the only good way to increase the pressure. 23...♘f4?! is strongly met by 24 ♕c2! (better than 24 ♕xb5 ♘d3) 24...♘d3 25 dxc5 ♘xe1 26 ♕xf5 ♗xf5 27 ♘d4! and with four pieces hanging Black has problems, despite his temporary extra rook!

24 ♕d2

After 24 ♗c2 ♕g4! Black has no problems. For example, 25 ♕d3 (also harmless are 25 ♘h4 ♕xe2 26 ♖xe2 ♗xe3 27 fxe3 cxd4 28 cxd4 ♘xe3 = and 25 ♘e5 ♕xe2 26 ♖xe2 ♗xe5 27 dxe5 ♖xe5 =) 25...g6 26 ♘e5 ♗xe5 27 dxe5 ♕f3 28 ♕e4 ♕xe4 29 ♗xe4 ♘xe3 30 ♖xe3 ♖xe5 = Svidler-Kramnik, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2007.

24...♘xe3 25 fxe3 ♗h6 26 ♕f2 ♖fe8 *(D)*

W



This is a critical position in the Spassky Variation. Black has two bishops and an active position, but White is a pawn up and he can fight in the centre with Black's bishops both on the h-file.

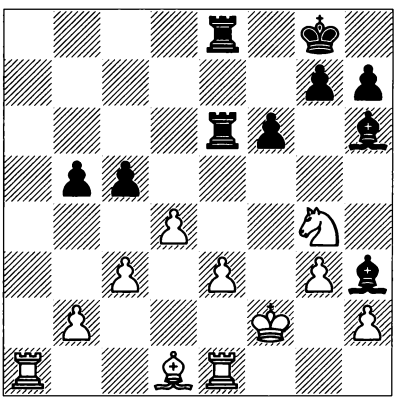
27 ♗c2

White can also try 27 ♘e5 ♕xf2+ 28 ♔xf2 f6, and here:

a) 29 ♗g4?! ♖xe5! 30 ♗xh3 ♗xe3+ 31 ♔f3 cxd4 32 ♖ad1 dxc3 33 bxc3 ♗b6 34 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 35 ♖d5 ♖e3+ 36 ♔g2 ♖xc3 37 ♖xb5 ♖c2+ 38 ♔h1 ♗c7 left Black a pawn up in Leko-Kramnik, Amber Blindfold, Monte Carlo 2007, although White should be able to draw this.

b) 29 ♘g4 *(D)* is much more challenging.

B



Black must play very precisely here:

b1) 29...♗xg4?! 30 ♗xg4 f5 (30...♖xe3 31 dxc5 and 30...♗xe3+ 31 ♔g2 ♖6e7 32 d5 look even worse) 31 ♗f3 ♗xe3+ 32 ♔g2 ♔f8 33 dxc5 ♗xc5 34 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 35 ♖a5 ♖b6 36 ♗e2 and Black is in for a difficult defence.

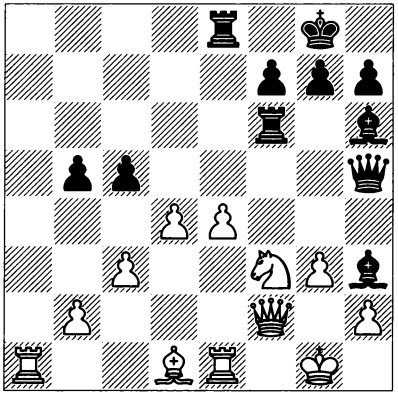
b2) 29...♗g5! 30 dxc5 (White is two pawns up, but the knight on g4 is trapped) 30...♔f8 (30...h5 is well met by 31 ♗b3! ♗xg4 32 ♖a5, but another possibility is 30...♖e4 31 ♗f3 ♖xg4 32 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 33 ♖a5 ♖d8) 31 ♔g1 ♖e4 32 ♘f2 ♖xe3 33 ♗e2 (33 ♖xe3 ♗xe3 is fine for Black after either 34 c6 ♖e5 or 34 b4 ♗xc5!) 33...♖xe2 34 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 35 ♘xh3 ♗e3+ 36 ♔h1 ♗xc5 37 ♘f4 ♖e5 and Black has finally equalized.

27...♕h5 28 e4

After 28 ♘e5 f6 29 ♗d1 ♕g5 30 ♘d3 Black can play 30...♕xe3!.

28...♖f6 29 ♗d1 *(D)*

B

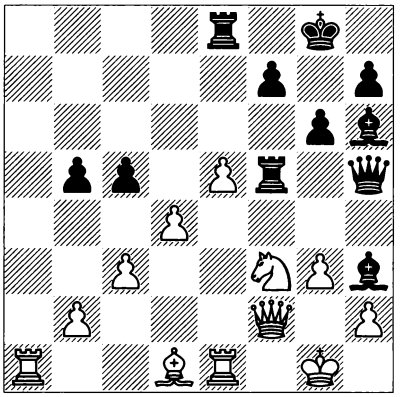


29...g6?

Grishchuk seems to have mixed up his preparation. The position is unclear after 29...♗g4 30 ♖f1 ♗h3 (or 30...g6 31 e5 ♖f5 32 h4 g5 33 ♕g2 cxd4 34 hxg5 ♗xg5 35 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 36 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 37 ♖xf5 ♕xf5 38 cxd4 ♕d3 ½-½ Bartsch-Utesch, corr. 2007) 31 e5 (31 ♖e1 ♗g4 repeats) 31...♗xf1 32 exf6 ♕h3 33 ♘h4 ♗d3, as in Balabaev-Leenders, corr. 2006.

30 e5 ♖f5 *(D)*

W



31 ♕e2!

Now 31...♗g4 can be met by 32 ♕xb5. Black's position quickly collapses.

31...cxd4 32 cxd4 ♖d8 33 ♕e4 ♕g4 34 ♕xg4 ♗xg4 35 ♘h4 ♖g5 36 ♗xg4 ♖xg4 37 ♘f3

1-0 Wang Hao-Grishchuk, Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008.

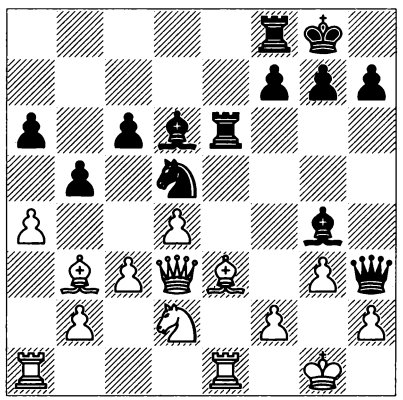
Conclusions

The Spassky Variation is holding up quite well in top-level play, which is a tribute to its soundness. After 20 ♘f1 both the older 20...♖fe8 and the more modern 20...♗f5 look fine for Black.

20 ♕f1 looks more challenging. Even though Black should hold the endgames that arise after 20...♖fe8, most players prefer the forcing 20...♗h3. Both 27 ♗c2 and 27 ♘e5 are critical, but I believe Black can equalize against both moves with precise play.

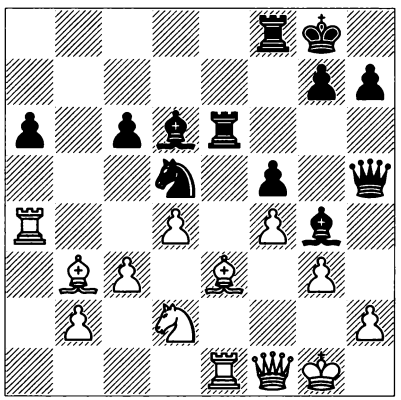
2 Old Main Line: 18...f5/18...bxa4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4 *(D)*



Black is at an important crossroads. White threatens 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 ♕xb5. Black can play 18...♕h5 to protect d5, which was covered in Chapter 1. The alternative is to play for a direct attack on the kingside with ...f5. Black can begin this plan by playing either 18...f5 or 18...bxa4, which often lead to the same position. The move-order that Black chooses should depend on the deviations for White that are possible after each move. The two ways to reach the Main Line are 18...f5 19 ♕f1 ♕h5 20 f4 bxa4 21 ♖xa4 and 18...bxa4 19 ♖xa4 f5 20 ♕f1 ♕h5 21 f4 *(D)*. In both cases we reach the position at the top of the next column.

It is from here that we form the basis for most of this chapter. The move-order that Black chooses will allow White certain deviations, however. Some of these sidelines are dangerous, and some are not. Even though 18...f5 is the traditional way of reaching the Main Line, I think that 18...bxa4 is the better way to head for the diagrammed position, so anyone wanting to play this variation would be well served learning this move-order. In any case, the two



methods to reach the Main Line should be studied together because there are many recurring ideas that are good to know.

The variations in this chapter are very tactical in nature and the play is a real slugfest, with both sides trying to get in the bigger and faster punch. Theoretically, Black has been considered to be on rather shaky ground, but there is still unexplored territory despite the line's historical popularity in both over-the-board and correspondence play. In any case, this chapter shows a lot of thematic ideas in the Marshall Attack that will help Black find his way in other variations as well.

Section 2.1: The Old Road 18...f5?! 31
Section 2.2: The New Road 18...bxa4 39
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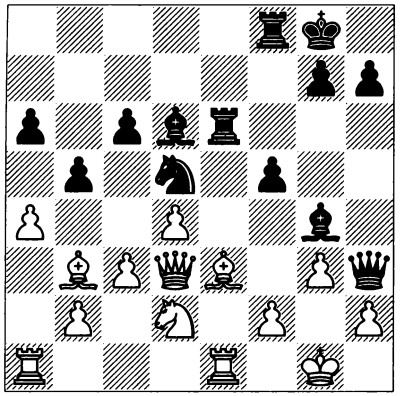
Section 2.1: The Old Road 18...f5?!

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4 f5?! *(D)*

Black ignores White's demonstration on the queenside and threatens ...f4 and ...♖h6. If White meets a subsequent ...♖h6 with ♘f1,

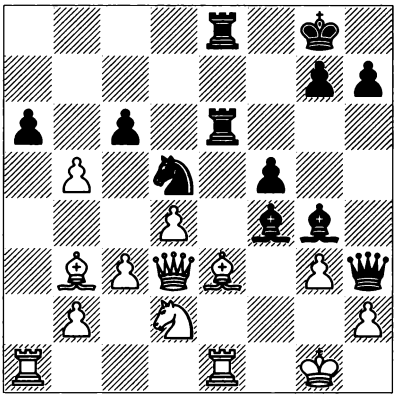
W



then ...♗f3 comes and White no longer has ♕f1 available to parry the mate threat on g2. Now, the Main Line is 19 ♕f1 ♕h5 20 f4 bxa4 21 ♖xa4, but there are a couple of other possibilities, of which one is very important. Note that 19 ♗xd5 cxd5 20 ♕f1 ♕h5 21 f4 will also transpose into main lines.

After the poorly-timed 19 f4?!, the response 19...♖fe8 is always given as the refutation, but I am not sure about this move. After 20 axb5 (worse is 20 ♗f2? ♗e2 21 ♕c2? ♗xf4! as given by Nunn, one possibility being 22 axb5 ♗xd2 23 ♕xd2 ♗f3 24 ♗e3 axb5! −+) Black plays 20...♗xf4 *(D)*.

W



This has been considered to be virtually winning for Black because, but after 21 gxf4? both 21...♖g6 and 21...♖h6 give Black a strong attack while 21 bxc6? ♗xg3! (better than 21...♖xe3? 22 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 23 ♖xe3 ♗xe3+ 24 ♔h1 ♗xd2 25 c7!) 22 hxg3 ♕xg3+ leads to mate after either 23 ♔h1 ♗f3+ or 23 ♔f1 ♘f4!. However, after 21 ♗f2! I cannot find a good continuation for Black. For example, 21...♗e2 22 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 23 bxc6 ♖xd2 24 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 25 ♕f1 looks better for White. All is not lost, however, and 19 f4?! probably *is* a mistake in view of 19...bxa4! with the idea 20 ♖xa4? ♗xf4!, when 21 gxf4 is met by 21...♖g6 and Black indeed has a strong attack.

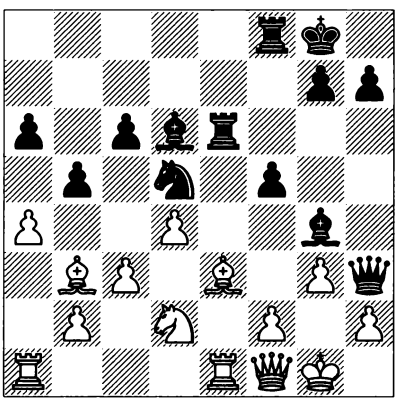
Thus we are left with two options for White. The first is the road White takes to head to the Main Line, while the second is the very dangerous 'Internet Refutation'. We have:

A: 19 ♕f1 32
B: 19 axb5!? 37

A)

19 ♕f1 *(D)*

B



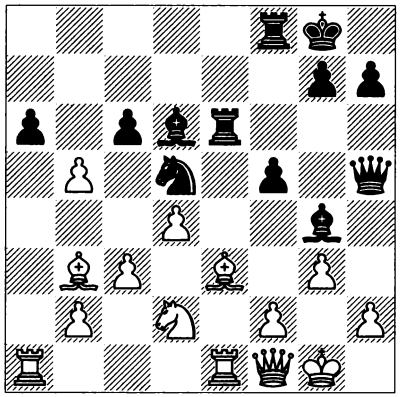
This is the traditional move. White evicts the black queen and in doing so escapes potential pins along the third rank and prepares to physically block the advance of Black's f-pawn by playing f4 himself.

19...♕h5 20 f4

The only real alternative is 20 axb5 *(D)*. This was recommended by Shamkovich and although it is not bad, it never really caught on. Black has:

a) 20...axb5?! should favour White because it will almost certainly help to have an open a-file for the rook. 21 ♗xd5 (21 f4 is also possible, leading to the note to Black's 20th move below, where Black avoids 20...bxa4, thus allowing 21 axb5) 21...cxd5 22 ♕xb5 f4 23 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 24 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 25 gxf4 ♕g6+ 26 ♔h1 ♕c2 gives Black some counterplay, but it is hard to believe that it is enough for the missing pawns.

B



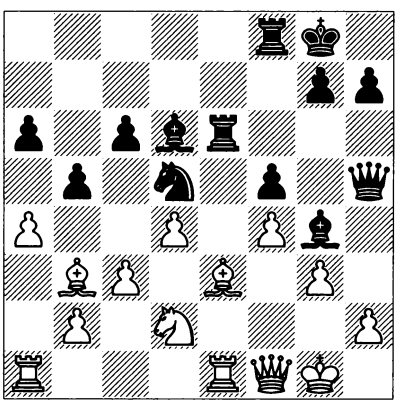
b) 20...f4 is a more sensible attempt to take advantage of White's move-order and it is probably stronger as well. 21 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 22 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 23 ♕e1!? (after 23 gxf4 axb5 Black has compensation according to Nunn, and this assessment has held up in correspondence games) and now:

b1) 23...♗h3 24 ♕e4 (24 bxc6!? ♔h8 25 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 26 ♕e4 may well be a better option) 24...♔h8 25 ♘f1 (25 bxc6 ♘xc3 26 bxc3 ♗xd2 27 ♕d3 ♖xf2! 28 ♔xf2 ♗f5 leads to perpetual check) 25...♖e8 26 ♕d3 axb5 27 gxf4 ♘xf4 28 ♘g3 ♕h4 gave Black compensation in McKenna-C.Chandler, corr. 1990-1.

b2) 23...♖e8 24 bxc6 ♘c7 looks rather unclear.

We now return to 20 f4 *(D)*:

B



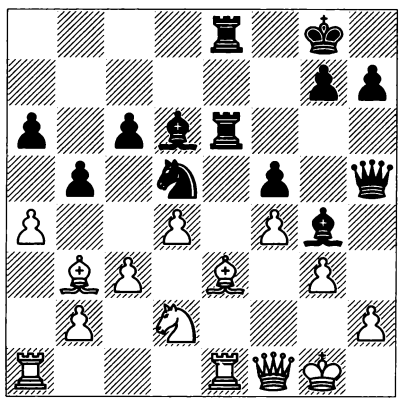
This move is a bit ugly positionally, but something had to be done about the advance of Black's f-pawn. On the plus side it gives White some more space and controls the e5- and g5-squares. Although the e3-bishop is a bit loose, Black is pinned along the a2-g8 diagonal. It is an interesting situation where neither the d5-knight nor the e6-rook is pinned, but if one piece moves, the other one will be. For this reason Black sometimes spends a tempo playing ...♔h8 to free up these pieces.

20...bxa4

Black avoids the threatened 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♕xb5, opens the b-file, and lures White's rook off the first rank. The a6-pawn is left to its fate, but Black hopes that he will be able to generate enough kingside play. To see why this move is supposed to be necessary, let's look at Black's other sensible-looking moves:

a) 20...♖fe8?! *(D)*.

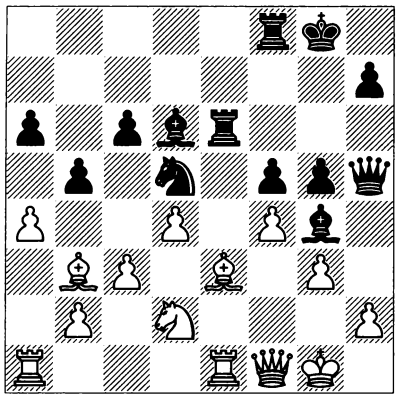
W



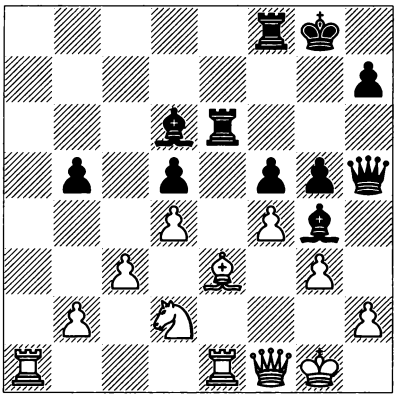
Black tries to counter White's attack on b5 and d5 by threatening the e3-bishop, but this natural move is probably just bad for tactical reasons. 21 axb5! axb5 (no better is 21...♖xe3 22 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 23 bxc6! ♖e2 24 ♗xd5+ and after either 24...♔f8 or 24...♔h8 White will play 25 h3! ♗xh3 26 ♗f3 leading to a winning ending for White) 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♕xb5 ♕f7 (23...♗xf4 24 ♕xd5 is simply winning for White, as pointed out by Nunn, while 23...♖xe3 24 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 25 ♕xd5+ also wins for White) 24 ♗f2! ± is given by Nunn. Black is just two pawns down.

b) 20...g5?! *(D)* is a typical thrust that we shall see again and again.

Black wants to break down White's pawn-chain on the dark squares at all costs. However, I think this move does not show enough respect for White's resources and, although complicated, I do not think this line holds up. 21 axb5



axb5 22 ♗xd5! (22 fxg5?! allows Black to escape after 22...f4! 23 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 24 gxf4 ♖xf4 25 ♕d3 ♗e2!, when White is forced to take perpetual check by 26 ♖a8+ ♔g7 27 ♖a7+ ♔f8 28 ♖a8+ ½-½ Roelens-Elent, corr. 1996) 22...cxd5 *(D)* and now:

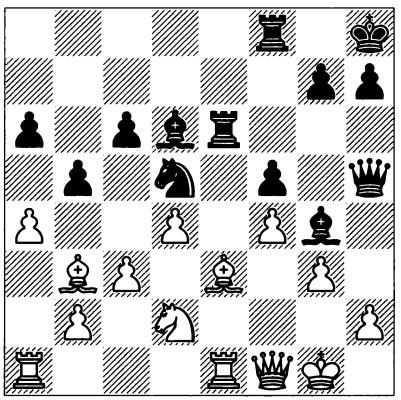


b1) 23 ♕xb5?! ♖h6 24 ♘f1 (after 24 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 25 ♕g2? gxf4 26 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 27 gxf4 ♗h3 ∓ Black's attack is very strong) 24...♗f3 25 fxg5 ♗xg3 26 ♖e2 f4 27 gxh6 ♗xe2 28 ♕c6 ♗h4 29 ♕e6+ ♔h8 30 ♗xf4 ♗f2+ 31 ♔xf2 ♖xf4+ 32 ♔g1 was drawn in Pietrocola-Elent, corr. 1999 because 32...♖xf1+! 33 ♖xf1 ♕g5+ leads to stalemate after either 34 ♔h1 ♗f3+ 35 ♖xf3 ♕g2+ or 34 ♔f2 ♕f4+ 35 ♔xe2 ♕xf1+ 36 ♔xf1.

b2) 23 ♕g2?! is murky after 23...♖fe8 24 ♕xd5 (24 ♗f2 ♕f7 25 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 is also unclear) 24...♕f7 25 ♖a8 gxf4 26 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27 ♕xd6 fxe3.

b3) By playing 23 fxg5!, White basically calls Black's bluff. Now 23...♖xe3 is thematic and forced – Black must play for destruction. 24 ♖xe3 f4 25 ♖f3! ♗xf3 26 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 27 ♘xf3 fxg3 was Fridel-Elent, corr. 1996. White can now play 28 ♔g2 gxh2 29 ♘xh2 ♗xh2 30 ♔xh2 ♖f2+ 31 ♔g3 ♖xb2 32 ♔f4 ±. The fireworks are over and White has a big advantage in the endgame. We shall see a similar version of this forcing play in other positions. Here it just does not work, and this line looks like enough reason for Black to avoid 20...g5.

c) 20...♔h8 *(D)*.



This line is also supposed to be dubious, but maybe it is not so bad. By breaking the pins on the a2-g8 diagonal, Black threatens the e3-bishop so White's reply is forced. Black still loses time and does nothing to address the queenside problems, but White has not found a convincing refutation yet. 21 ♗xd5 (21 ♗f2 ♖h6 22 ♕g2 ♗h3 23 ♕f3 ♗g4 is a draw) 21...cxd5 22 axb5 and now:

c1) 22...♕e8? 23 bxa6! (Black must always be wary of sacrifices of this nature) 23...♖xe3 24 a7 ♖xe1 25 ♕xe1 ♕xe1+ 26 ♖xe1 ♖a8 27 ♖e6 ♗c7 (St.Collins-P.Barrett, corr. 1999) and now 28 ♔f2! (to stop ...♗e2) followed by 29 ♖a6 gives White a big advantage.

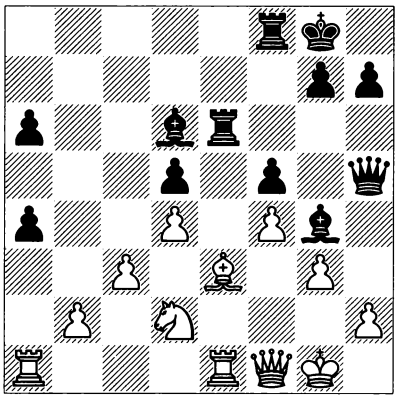
c2) 22...axb5 23 ♕xb5 (23 ♕g2!? is also possible) 23...♖h6 24 h4! (24 ♘f1 ♗f3 25 b3 g5! gave Black good play in Arias Duval-Gimenez, corr. 2003) 24...g5 25 fxg5 ♗xg3 26 gxh6 ♗h2+ 27 ♔h1 and now instead of 27...♕xh4? 28 ♗g5! ♕xg5 29 ♖e8 +– Hage-Horak, corr. 1999, Black should play 27...♗b8 28 ♗g5 ♗f3+ 29 ♘xf3 ♕xf3+ 30 ♔g1 ♕g3+ 31 ♔f1 ♕f3+ with a draw. This is a line that could be explored further.

21 ♗xd5!?

21 ♖xa4 is the Main Line, and will be considered in Section 2.3.

21...cxd5 *(D)*

W

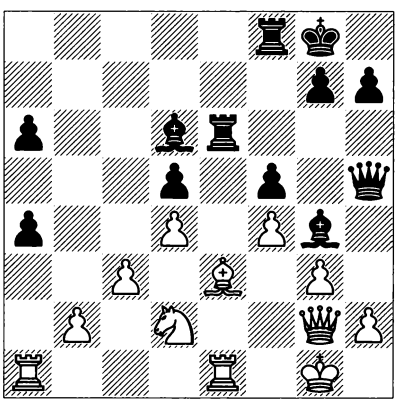


22 ♕g2 *(D)*

White attacks the d5-pawn, which is rather difficult to defend.

22 ♖xa4?? is a surprisingly common blunder because of 22...♕e8!. This is a typical tactical idea by which Black attacks the a4-rook and e3-bishop. White resigned immediately in Renet-Nunn, European Team Ch, Haifa 1989, while 23 ♗f2 ♖xe1 24 ♕xe1 ♕xa4 25 ♕e6+ ♖f7 26 ♕xd6 ♕d1+ 27 ♘f1 h6 28 ♕d8+ ♔h7 29 ♕xd5 ♗h3 0-1 was Kindermann-Lukacs, Budapest 1987.

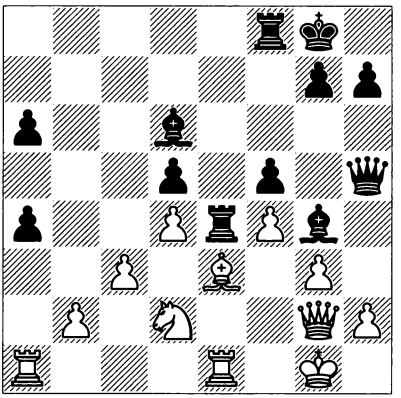
B



22...♖fe8

This is the most sensible move, simply offering the d5-pawn, but Black has also tried to shield the pawn with the exchange sacrifice 22...♖e4 *(D)*.

W



This interesting idea will probably not hold up to modern (i.e., computer-assisted) scrutiny:

a) 23 ♘xe4?! fxe4 24 ♖xa4 g5 25 ♖xa6 gxf4 (not 25...♗f3? 26 ♕f2 ♗xf4 27 ♖a5! +–) and here:

a1) 26 gxf4 and now 26...♖f6?! is line 'b3' below, but 26...♔h8! holds, since 27 ♖xd6 (27 ♖ea1 ♖g8 28 ♖a8 ♗f8) 27...♖g8 28 f5 ♗f3 29 ♕xg8+ ♔xg8 30 ♖d8+ leads to perpetual check.

a2) 26 ♖xd6 fxe3 27 ♖xe3 ♗h3 28 g4 wins a rook but not the game after 28...♕h4 29 ♕xh3 ♕f2+ 30 ♔h1 ♖a8 31 ♖d8+ ♖xd8 32 g5 ♖a8 33 ♕e6+ and White must give perpetual check, as has occurred in a few games.

b) Therefore White tends to ignore the rook, at least for the time being: 23 ♖xa4 g5 24 ♖xa6 gxf4 and now:

b1) 25 ♘xe4?! fxe4 transposes to line 'a' above.

b2) 25 ♖xd6?! fxe3 (25...♖xe3? 26 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 27 ♖xe3 fxe3 28 ♕e5+ is winning for White, as pointed out by Nunn) 26 ♘xe4 fxe4 transposes to line 'a2'.

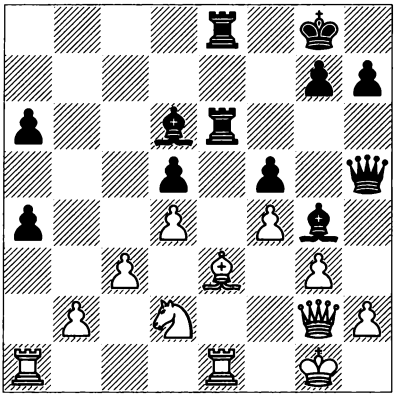
b3) 25 gxf4 is probably best. 25...♖f6 26 ♘xe4 fxe4 and now:

b31) 27 ♗f2 ♖g6 28 ♖xd6 (28 ♗g3! looks good for White) 28...♖xd6 29 ♗g3 ♗f3 30 ♕f1 ♖g6 31 ♔f2 is not so clear, as pointed out by Nunn. Despite the two extra pawns, the opposite-coloured bishops and White's draughty king give Black reasonable chances.

b32) 27 h3! ♕xh3 (27...♖g6 28 ♖xd6! ♗e6 29 ♖xe6 ♖xg2+ 30 ♔xg2 ♕f3+ 31 ♔h2 leaves White with way too much for the queen) 28 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 29 ♔f2 ±. If Black cannot improve here (and he probably cannot), then 22...♖e4 has to be discarded.

Now back to 22...♖fe8 *(D)*.

W

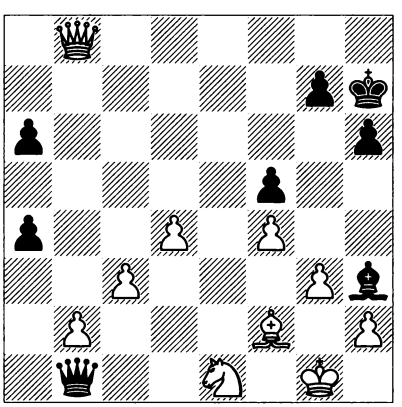


23 ♕xd5 ♔h8 24 ♗f2 ♗e2

Black maintains the tension. The alternative is 24...♖xe1+ 25 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 26 ♗xe1 ♕e8 27 ♗f2 h6!. Black takes care of his back-rank problem in preparation for a ...♕e2 invasion. White has tried a few moves here:

a) 28 ♕xd6 (28 ♘c4 ♕e2 29 ♘e3 ♗h3 30 ♕xd6 is the same) does not lead anywhere. After 28...♕e2 White is a piece up but he cannot win. In fact, he can even lose if he is not careful: 29 ♘f1 ♗h3 30 ♕b8+? (30 ♘e3 ♕xb2 31 ♗e1 a3 32 ♕f8+ ♔h7 33 g4! and White will deliver perpetual check himself) 30...♔h7 31 ♘e3 ♕d3 32 ♘g2 ♕b1+ 33 ♘e1 *(D)* (or 33 ♗e1 ♕e4).

B



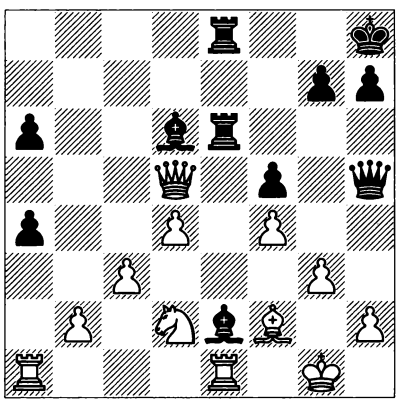
33...a3! 0-1 Ernst-Sammalvuo, Osterskars 1995.

b) 28 ♔g2 ♕e2 29 h3 (29 ♘c4 ♗xf4 30 h3 {not 30 gxf4? ♗h3+! mating} 30...♗xh3+ 31 ♔xh3 ♕xf2 32 gxf4 ♕f1+ is a draw because the white queen must protect the c4-knight) 29...♗xh3+ 30 ♔xh3 ♕xd2 31 ♕xd6 ♕xf2 32 ♕f8+ ♔h7 33 ♕xf5+ ♔h8 34 ♕d3 ♕xb2 35 d5 a3 36 d6 ♕b6 37 d7 ♕d8 was eventually drawn in Filipek-Miciak, corr. 2003.

c) 28 h3!? (again, this small move is a rather testing idea) 28...♗xh3 29 ♘c4 ♗c7 30 ♘e3 ♕b8 31 ♕a2 ♕b7 32 ♕xa4 ♕xb2 33 ♕xa6 ♕xc3 34 ♔h2 ♗g4 35 ♘xg4 fxg4 36 ♕c8+ ♔h7 37 ♕f5+ ♔g8 38 ♕xg4 ± Nebel-Polevoy, corr. 2003.

We now return to 24...♗e2 *(D)*:

W



25 ♔g2

White wants to play ♘f3-e5. The alternative is 25 ♖xa4?!, and then:

a) 25...♗c4? 26 ♕xc4! (worse is 26 ♖xc4 ♖xe1+ 27 ♗xe1 ♖xe1+ 28 ♘f1 ½-½ Popović-Pinter, Hastings 1980/1) 26...♖xe1+ 27 ♗xe1 ♖xe1+ 28 ♘f1 ♕e8 and now:

a1) 29 ♔f2 ♖b1 30 ♖a2 ♕e1+ 31 ♔g2 ♕e4+ 32 ♔h3 (32 ♔g1 ♕e3+ repeats) 32...g5! gives Black enough counterplay.

a2) 29 ♖xa6! looks convincing as 29...♕e3+ 30 ♔g2 ♖e2+ 31 ♔h3 +– just wins for White.

b) 25...♗xf4 (this idea of Nunn's is best) 26 gxf4 ♗c4 27 ♖xc4 ♖xe1+ 28 ♘f1 (or 28 ♗xe1 ♖xe1+ 29 ♘f1 ♖xf1+ 30 ♔xf1 ♕d1+ – Nunn) 28...♕g4+ 29 ♗g3 h5 is unclear.

25...h6 26 ♘f3

26 ♖xa4?! ♗xf4 27 gxf4 ♕g4+ 28 ♗g3 ♖e3 29 ♖aa1! (not 29 ♔f2? ♗d3! 30 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 with decisive threats, Lang-Ramon, corr. 1985) 29...♖d3! gives Black sufficient counterplay.

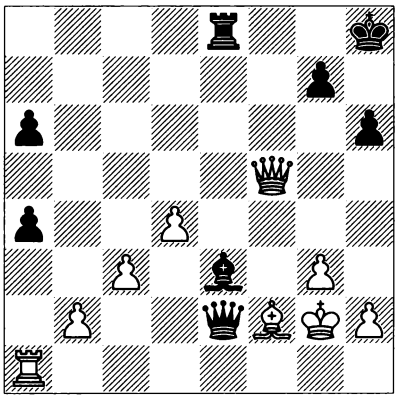
26...♗xf4 27 ♘g1!

This is forced. Nunn gave 27 gxf4? ♕g4+ 28 ♗g3 ♗xf3+ 29 ♕xf3 ♖e2+ 30 ♖xe2 ♖xe2+ 31 ♕f2 as likely to lead to a draw, but in fact Black

is winning after 31...g5! 32 h3 ♖xf2+ 33 ♔xf2 ♕xh3 34 d5 gxf4 35 ♗xf4 ♕d3.

27...♗d2 28 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 29 ♘xe2 ♕xe2 30 ♕xf5 ♗e3 *(D)*

W



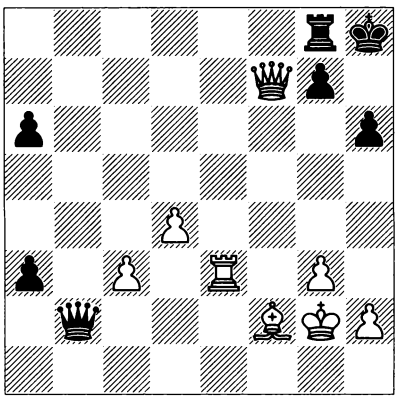
Black is hoping to capture on b2 and push the a-pawn.

31 ♖e1!

Not convincing is 31 ♕f7 ♗xf2 32 ♕xf2 ♕b5 33 ♕f7 ♕xb2+ ½-½ Matsukevich-Filippov, corr. 1983.

31...♕xb2 32 ♕f7 ♖g8 33 ♖xe3 a3 *(D)*

W



34 d5!

This allows Black to get a second queen, but it is a clear-cut win for White. Too hasty is 34 ♖e6? a2 35 ♖xa6 a1♕ 36 ♖xa1 ♕xa1 =, while 34 ♖e1 a2 35 d5 ♕d2 36 c4 ♕xe1 37 ♗xe1 a1♕ 38 ♗f2 somewhat favours White. The text-move is much more convincing.

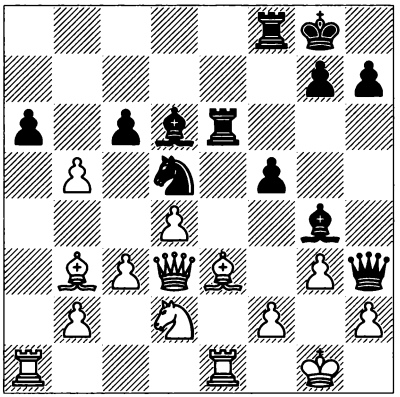
34...a2 35 d6 a1♕ 36 ♖e8 ♖xe8 37 ♕xe8+ ♔h7 38 ♕e4+

and 39 d7 wins.

B)

19 axb5!? *(D)*

B



If there is a fatal problem with the 18...f5 move-order, this is it. This line, known as the 'Internet Refutation', was brought into the limelight by the American Daniel Quigley back in 1998. Neither Nunn's 1990 work nor Anand's 1993 monograph had reason to consider 19 axb5, which at first looks like a blunder. However, in *NCO* (2nd impression), Nunn considers it to lead to a clear advantage for White. Oddly, Lalić's 2003 work does not even mention it, even though it is extremely dangerous and may well constitute a refutation of Black's move-order. In any case, before Black ventures 18...f5 he had better at least be aware of this possibility.

Why was this move ignored for so long? It had always been assumed that the threat of 19...f4 with an attack against the white king was too strong to allow White to spend time capturing a pawn on the queenside. Nowadays it would be easy to see with the help of a strong engine that this idea deserves very serious attention, but back when the move was discovered it was quite a find.

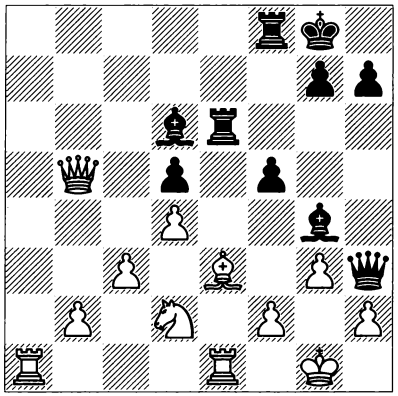
19...f4

The alternative is 19...axb5, but this allows White simply to carry out his threat that began with 18 a4 by playing 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 ♕xb5 *(D)*.

White is two pawns up and d5 is hanging. The only chance is 21...f4 but this is inadequate after 22 ♗xf4:

a) 22...♖xf4 just loses: 23 ♖xe6 (23 gxf4 may also win) 23...♖xf2 24 ♖e8+ (simplifying

B



with 24 ♖a8+ ♗f8 25 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 26 ♖e8 is another way to win) 24...♔f7 25 ♕xd5+ ♔xe8 26 ♖a8+ ♔e7 27 ♖a7+ ♗d7 28 ♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 29 ♔e3 ♕xg3+ 30 ♘f3 +−. Black is too much material down.

b) 22...♗xf4 23 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 (after 23...♗xd2 24 ♖e8! White has a winning attack with his major pieces) 24 gxf4 ♕g4+ 25 ♔h1 ♕xf4 26 ♕e2 ±. White must still take some care, but ultimately the two extra pawns should win.

These lines provide a good illustration of White's counterplay being stronger than Black's attack, even though Black is playing for mate.

20 ♗xf4! *(D)*

White is willing to sacrifice a piece in order to break through on the queenside. Not only is bxa6 a possibility, giving White a strong passed pawn, but when White plays bxc6, the defence of the d5-knight will disappear. It is also important that White maintains pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal – if Black moves the d5-knight or the e6-rook then the other piece will remain pinned. This move is not only strong; it is forced because other moves are just bad:

a) 20 ♘f1?? ♗f3 mates.

b) 20 ♕f1? fxe3 21 ♖xe3 axb5 ∓.

c) 20 ♗xd5? cxd5 21 ♗xf4 ♖xe1+ 22 ♖xe1 ♗xf4 ∓.

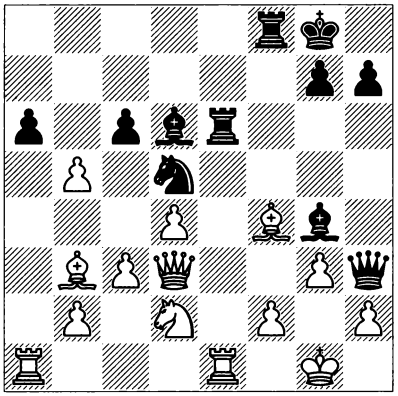
d) 20 bxc6? fxg3 21 fxg3 (21 hxg3 ♗xg3! leads to mate) 21...♗xg3 22 ♖e2 ♗f5! wins for Black.

After the text-move Black has several moves to choose from, but only one deserves serious consideration.

20...♗xf4

This is the best try because others are refuted easily; for example:

B

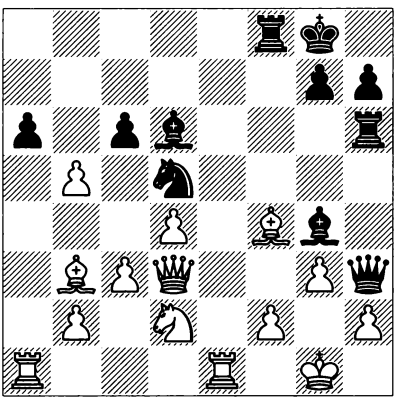


a) 20...♖xf4? 21 ♕f1!. A typical defensive idea in this line: White shores up the kingside and offers an exchange of queens while all of Black's pieces are hanging in the air. 21...♕h5 22 bxc6 ♖ff6 23 ♖a5! is overwhelming.

b) 20...♘xf4 is refuted in the same manner: 21 ♕f1! ♕h5 22 gxf4 ♗xf4 23 ♕g2 ♗xd2 24 ♖e5! (Quigley) forces Black into a lost ending after 24...♕g6 25 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 26 ♕xg6 hxg6 27 ♗xe6+.

c) 20...♖h6 *(D)* is very creative, but does not quite work:

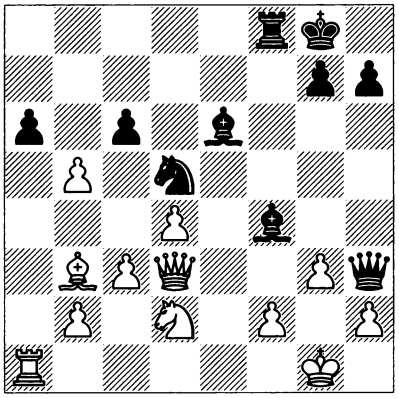
W



c1) 21 ♗xh6?! ♖xf2 22 ♖e8+ ♔f7 23 ♗xd5+ cxd5 24 ♖e7+! ♔f8 (both 24...♔xe7? 25 ♕e3+ and 24...♗xe7? 25 ♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 26 ♔e1 lose quickly) 25 ♗xg7+ ♔g8 26 ♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 27 ♔e3 (27 ♔e1 ♗xg3+ 28 ♕xg3 ♕xg3+ 29 ♔f1 ♗h3+ drawing – Harding) and Harding mysteriously stops here, but after 27...♕xg3+ 28 ♘f3 ♕xf3+ 29 ♔d2 ♕f2+ 30 ♖e2 ♗f4+ 31 ♔d1 ♔xg7 32 bxa6 ♕f1+ 33 ♔c2 ♕xa1 34 ♖g2 h5 35 ♕f3 ♗g5 36 ♖xg4 a draw is likely.

c2) 21 ♘f1! is the strongest move. 21...♖xf4 (21...♗xf4 22 bxc6 +–) 22 bxc6 ♗f3 23 ♕xf3 ♖xf3 24 ♗xd5+ ♖f7 25 ♖e8+ ♗f8 26 c7 ♖c6 27 ♗xc6 ♖xc7 28 ♗d5+ ♖f7 leaves White with many ways to win, the simple 29 ♘e3 being one possibility.

21 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 *(D)*



22 bxa6!

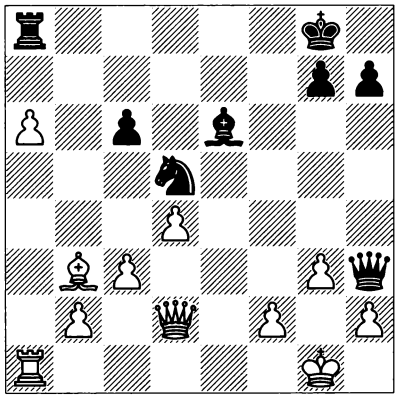
The passed a-pawn will keep Black tied up. 22 bxc6 ♗xd2 23 ♕xd2 ♘f4 24 ♗xe6+ ♕xe6 25 f3 is also possible, but it allows Black better counterchances than the text-move.

22...♗xd2 23 ♕xd2

White can also play 23 a7 ♘c7 24 ♗xe6+ ♕xe6 25 ♕xd2 ♖a8, but I think the text-move is more flexible.

23...♖a8 *(D)*

23...♘c7 24 ♕c2 ♖a8 25 a7 ♕h6 26 ♗xe6+ ♕xe6 27 c4 ♕d6 28 ♕e4 ± De Oliveira-Maffei, corr. 1999.



24 ♕e2

24 a7 ♗f7 25 ♕e2 is the same.

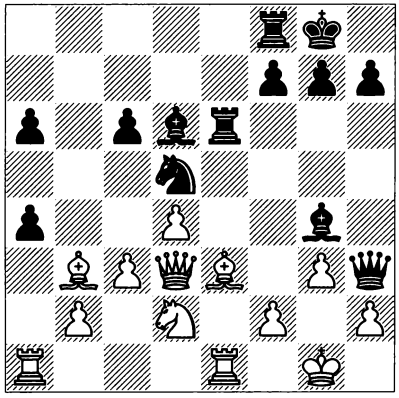
24...♗f7 25 a7 ♕d7 26 ♕a6

White has four pawns for a piece and the passed a-pawn will keep Black all tied up.

Although there are some complicated tactical lines, clearly Black is struggling against 19 axb5, while he has also failed to come up with a clearly satisfactory reply to 19 ♕f1 ♕h5 20 f4 bxa4 21 ♗xd5.

Section 2.2: The New Road 18...bxa4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4 bxa4 *(D)*



This move is very strange-looking at first. Black destroys his pawn-structure and leaves his queenside to its fate. Also, White now has access to the c4-square for his pieces as well as the possibility of playing c4. However, there are some tactical points to this move – whichever way White recaptures, one of his pieces will be deflected. Taking with the bishop gives up pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal, while recapturing with the rook leaves White's back rank more vulnerable. Another point to this move is that sometimes Black may switch over to the queenside and use his king's rook along the b-file.

19 ♖xa4

19 ♗xa4 is also possible, but Black is OK after 19...♗f4! (exploiting the pin along the

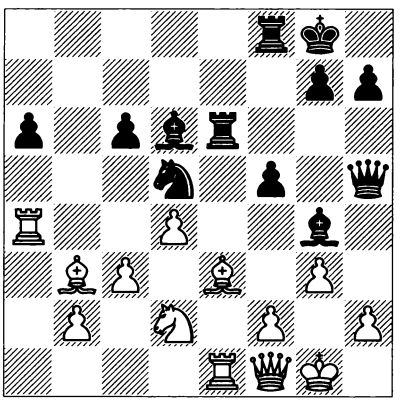
third rank) 20 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 21 ♕f1 ♘e2+ 22 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 23 ♘c4 (23 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 24 ♘c4 ♖fe8 25 ♘e3 ♖xb2 26 ♗xc6 ♖eb8 27 ♗e4 a5 is a little better for Black) 23...♖e6 (after 23...♕h5 24 ♗d1 ♖e6 both 25 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 26 ♘e3 ♕g6 27 ♖xa6 ♖fe8 {Tošić-Hazai, Vrnjačka Banja 1984} and 25 ♖a5 ♕h3 26 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 27 ♘e3 ♖a8 {Cao Sang-Hazai, Hungary 1998} are equal) 24 ♘e5 ♕xf1+ 25 ♖xf1 ♗h3 and now 26 ♖d1! (26 ♖a1? c5! gives Black the initiative) rules out 26...c5 due to 27 ♗d7 ♖xe5 28 dxe5, but 26...♖c8 should be tenable for Black.

19...f5 20 ♕f1

Not 20 f4? ♗xf4! 21 gxf4 (21 ♗xd5? cxd5 22 gxf4 loses to 22...♖h6!, one point being 23 ♖e2 ♖g6! 24 ♖g2 ♕xg2+ 25 ♔xg2 ♗e2+) 21...♖g6 22 ♗xd5+ cxd5 (also good is 22...♔h8!? 23 ♔h1 ♖h6 24 ♖e2 cxd5 25 ♖g2 ♖g6 26 ♖f2 ♖e8 27 ♖a1 ♖ge6 ∓) 23 ♖xa6 ♗e2+ 24 ♖xg6 ♗xd3 25 ♖g3 ♕h6 ∓.

20...♕h5 *(D)*

W



Now 21 f4 leads to the Main Line (Section 2.3), but Black has managed to avoid the dangerous 19 axb5 from Section 2.1, Line B. White has two other moves to consider:

A: 21 c4 40

B: 21 ♖xa6 41

A)

21 c4

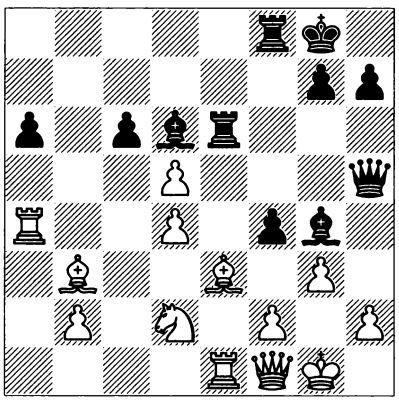
This had always been considered the critical test of 18...bxa4, but the latest evidence suggests that this move is actually more dangerous for White than it is for Black.

21...f4

Heading into a tactical firestorm. If Black wants to avoid the mess that follows, he can play 21...♘xe3 22 fxe3 (not 22 ♖xe3? f4 23 ♖xe6 fxg3! 24 hxg3 ♗xg3 −+) 22...c5 with some compensation. Objectively, Black should not fear the main line though.

22 cxd5 *(D)*

B



22...♖xe3

Black should avoid 22...fxe3? 23 dxe6 ♖xf2 24 e7+ (this is the human continuation, but 24 h3! is even stronger according to the machines) 24...♔h8 25 e8♕+ ♕xe8 26 ♖xe3 ♖xf1+ 27 ♘xf1, when White has too much for the queen.

However, Black does have an alternative in 22...fxg3!?. Then 23 hxg3 ♗xg3 24 ♕g2 ♖xe3! 25 ♖xe3 (25 dxc6+ ♖xb3 26 fxg3 ♖xb2 is good for Black) 25...♗xf2+ 26 ♕xf2 ♖xf2 27 dxc6+ ♔h8 28 ♔xf2 ♕h2+ 29 ♔e1 ♕h4+ 30 ♔f1 ♕h1+ is a draw. This line alone is enough to show the theoretical soundness of Black's position after 21...f4.

23 fxe3 fxg3 24 dxc6+ ♔h8 25 hxg3 ♖xf1+ 26 ♖xf1 ♕g5 27 ♖f4

Worse is 27 ♘c4 ♗e2! 28 ♔f2 ♗xf1 29 ♘xd6 ♕f6+ 30 ♔g1 ♕xd6 31 ♔xf1 ♕xg3 and Black is much better.

27...♗xf4 28 exf4 ♕e7 29 ♘f1 *(D)*

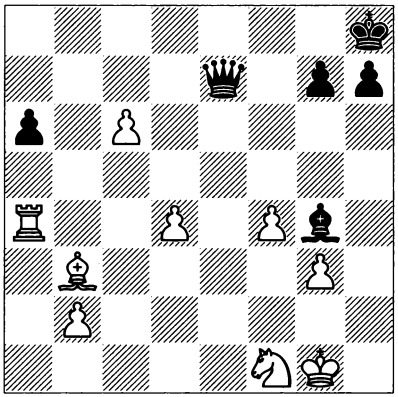
White is doing well from a material standpoint and his passed pawns look dangerous, but Black has a resource.

29...♕e4!

This nice move throws White off balance.

30 d5 ♕d3 31 ♖b4 g5! 32 c7 ♔g7

This was Jo.Fernandez-Claridge, corr. 1998. White's uncoordinated pieces leave him unable

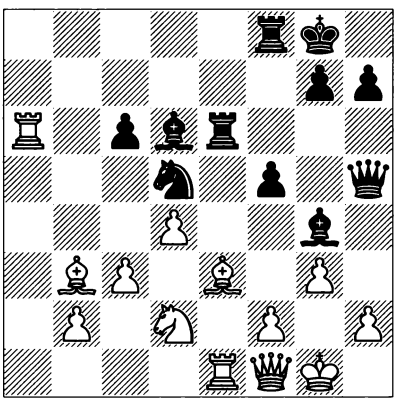


to hold everything together, despite the passed pawns.

B)

21 ♖xa6 *(D)*

White starts chopping. This is much less risky for White than 21 c4, and it is also more of a challenge to Black's move-order.



21...f4

With his queenside crumbling, Black must push forward with his kingside attack.

22 ♗xf4

As in the 18...f5?! 19 axb5!? line, White is willing to shed a piece to end Black's attacking chances.

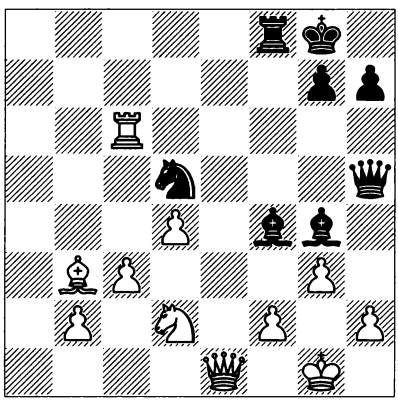
Not 22 ♖xc6? fxe3 23 ♖xe3 ♘xe3 24 ♗xe6+ ♗xe6 25 ♕e1 ♗d5 26 ♖xd6 as 26...♕h3! mates.

22...♖xe1

22...♗h3 23 ♖xe6 ♗xf1 24 ♘xf1 ♗xf4 25 ♖axc6 ♕f3 and now 26 ♗xd5?! ♕xd5 27 gxf4 ♕f3 28 d5 was played in Ivanchuk-Short, Tal Memorial, Riga 1995. Here 28...♖xf4 would induce White to take a draw with 29 ♖c8+ ♔f7 30 ♖c7+ ♔f8. However, 26 gxf4 ♖xf4 27 ♖e8+ ♔f7 28 ♗xd5+ ♕xd5 29 ♖cc8, as given in *Informator*, looks stronger.

23 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 24 ♖xc6 *(D)*

24 gxf4 ♖e8 25 ♕a1 ♗h3 26 ♗xd5+ cxd5 27 f3 h6 ∓ is given by Pavlović.



24...♖e8

24...♗xd2 25 ♕xd2 ♖e8 26 ♖c5 (the pin looks annoying, but White has difficulty capitalizing on it) 26...♗f3 27 ♗c4?! (after 27 ♗xd5+ ♗xd5 28 c4 ♕h6! 29 ♕c3 ♗c6 30 d5 ♗d7 31 ♖a5 ♕g6 32 ♖a1 ♕e4 Black is OK – Pavlović; 27 ♕c1 is also possible) and now:

a) 27...♔h8 and now Pavlović focuses on 28 b4?, but 28 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 29 c4! ♕h6! 30 ♕d1 looks good for White.

b) 27...♕f5 28 ♕c1 (Pavlović again offers a rather 'cooperative' line, 28 ♗f1? ♕b1) 28...♗e4 29 ♕d1 gives White four pawns for the piece, though Black still has counterplay.

c) After 27...♕h6! 28 ♕xh6 (28 ♗xd5+? ♔f8! −+) 28...♖e1+ 29 ♗f1 gxh6, only White is in danger. 30 c4 ♘f6!? (30...♗e2 31 cxd5 leads to an ending where White's pawns aren't so great a threat) 31 ♖e5 ♘e4 32 ♖e8+ ♔f7 33 ♖e5 sees White clinging on by his fingertips.

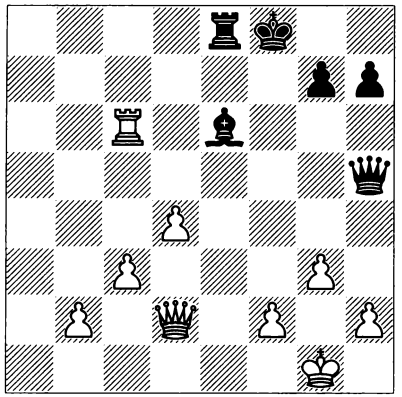
25 ♗xd5+ ♔f8 26 ♗e6

Worse are 26 ♕xe8+? ♕xe8 27 gxf4 ♕e2 ∓ J.Fernandez-Bennedik, corr. 1998 and 26 ♕a1 ♕xd5 27 ♖c5 ♕e6 28 gxf4? ♗h3 29 ♘f1 ♕g4+ 30 ♘g3 ♕f3 −+.

26...♗xd2 27 ♕xd2 ♗xe6 *(D)*

Black retains counterchances, but it is not easy to get the bishop into an attacking position.

W

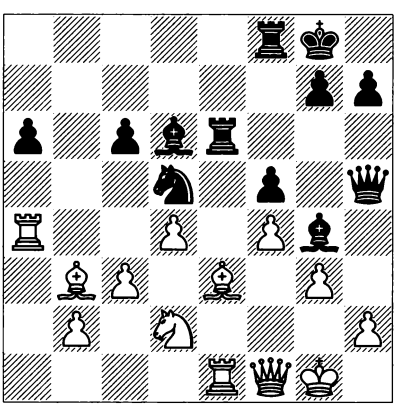


In heading for the Main Line, Black has to decide which deviations are more dangerous to deal with – those after 18...f5 or those after 18...bxa4. Although White has some complicated tries after 18...bxa4, both of White's deviations after 18...f5 are clearly more dangerous.

Section 2.3: The Main Line

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4 bxa4 (or 18...f5?! 19 ♕f1 ♕h5 20 f4 bxa4 21 ♖xa4) **19 ♖xa4 f5 20 ♕f1 ♕h5 21 f4** *(D)*

B



This is the starting position for the Main Line. Black has to decide how to fight for the initiative. He can try to rip open the kingside, utilize the freshly opened b-file, or simply double rooks on the e-file. Thus there are three main continuations:

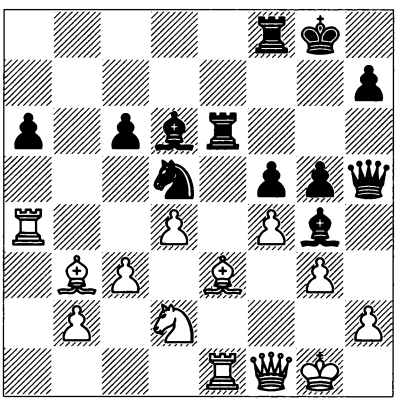
A: 21...g5?! 42
B: 21...♖b8?! 44
C: 21...♖fe8 46

The only real alternative to these three moves is 21...♔h8?!, but then 22 ♗xd5! (better than 22 ♘c4?! ♗xf4! 23 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 24 ♖xe6 ♘h3+! 25 ♔g2 ♘g5! 26 ♕f2 ♗f3+ 27 ♔f1 f4!, when Black is pressing) 22...cxd5 23 ♖xa6 leaves Black with nothing better than 23...♖fe8, transposing to the note to Black's 22nd move in Line C1, because 23...♕e8 24 ♗f2! ♗e2 25 ♖xd6 is winning for White (Nunn) and 23...g5 24 fxg5 ♖fe8 25 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 26 ♗f4 ± is clearly not satisfactory either. However, Black is struggling there too, so 21...♔h8 should probably be discarded.

A)

21...g5?! *(D)*

W



This used to be the main line and it has probably been refuted, but it is tricky, with some lines still open to dispute. Because this is the most brutal and direct way to play, 21...g5 is certainly critical. Black will try to attack at all costs.

22 ♖xa6 gxf4

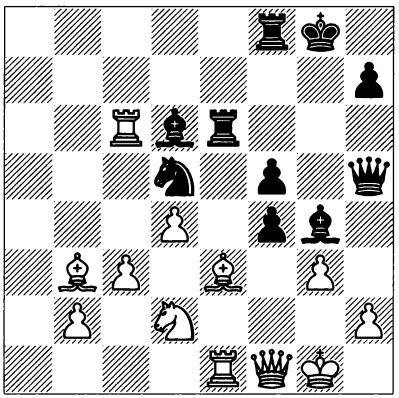
Essentially the position is a race. Black's attack may look strong but his own position is rather rickety. The play will be very tactical from this point forward. White has:

A1: 23 ♖xc6 43
A2: 23 ♗xf4! 43

A1)

23 ♖xc6 *(D)*

B



Black seems to hold his own after this.

23...fxe3

This looks simplest, but other moves are possible:

a) 23...♖xe3? is bad due to 24 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 25 ♖xd6 fxg3 26 h3! ♗xh3 27 ♖xe3 ♗xf1 28 ♘xf1 f4 29 ♖e7! and White's attack is faster, Matsukevich-Kucherov, corr. 1983.

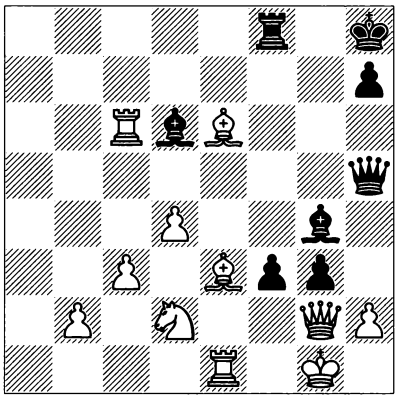
b) 23...♖h6 is risky. 24 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 25 ♕g2 fxe3 26 ♘c4 f4 27 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 28 ♘xd6 f3 29 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 30 h4! (better than 30 ♖f1 ♕d5! or 30 b4 ♗h3 31 ♕e2 {31 ♕a2? ♖f8! −+} 31...♖f1+ 32 ♕xf1 ♗xf1 33 ♖xf1 e2 34 ♖e1 ♕f3 ∓) 30...♗e6 31 g4! (31 ♖f1?! e2! 32 ♖e1 ♗d5 33 ♖xe2 ♕g6 34 ♔h2 ♖e3! with counterplay) 31...♗xg4 (31...♕xh4 32 ♕xf3 ♕xe1+ 33 ♔g2 ♔g8 34 ♘e4 e2 35 ♘g3 ♗c4 36 ♕a8+ +−) 32 ♘c4 is good for White.

c) 23...fxg3 also looks fine for Black, but it is complicated:

c1) 24 hxg3 f4 25 ♖xd6 fxg3 26 ♕g2 ♖xd6 27 ♕h1? (better is 27 ♗xd5+ ♖xd5 28 ♕xg3 with unclear play) 27...♗h3! 28 ♕e4 was soon drawn by repetition in Elburg-K.D.Müller, corr. 1984. However, after 28...♗e6 29 ♕h1 Black does not have to repeat because 29...♕xh1+ 30 ♔xh1 ♘xe3 is clearly better for him.

c2) 24 ♕g2 f4 (also good enough is 24...♔h8 25 ♗xd5 ♗h3! {not 25...♕g6? 26 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 27 hxg3 +− Nunn} 26 ♕e2 ♗g4 27 ♕g2 {White must repeat because 27 ♗f3? ♖xe3 −+ and 27 ♘f3? f4 −+ cannot be considered} 27...♗h3 with a draw) 25 ♗xd5 f3 26 ♗xe6+ ♔h8 *(D)*.

W



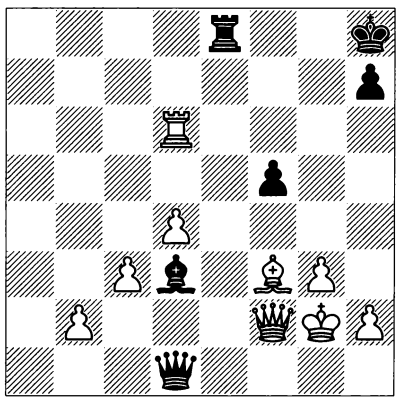
What a position! White is a rook and a piece up but his kingside has been cut to ribbons. Of course the position is probably just equal... 27 h3!! (an amazing move) 27...f2+! 28 ♗xf2 gxf2+ 29 ♕xf2 ♗xe6! 30 ♕xf8+ ♗xf8 31 ♖exe6 ♕g5+ 32 ♔h1 ♕xd2 leads to a likely draw.

24 ♗xd5 ♔h8! 25 ♗xe6 exd2 26 ♖a1 ♗e2

26...♗xg3 27 hxg3 ♗f3 is not so simple after 28 ♕b5!, giving the king an escape-route and threatening ♕e5+.

27 ♕f2 ♗b5 28 ♖xd6 d1♕+ 29 ♖xd1 ♕xd1+ 30 ♔g2 ♗d3 31 ♗d5 ♖e8 32 ♗f3 *(D)*

B



32...♗e2

32...♗e4 also draws easily.

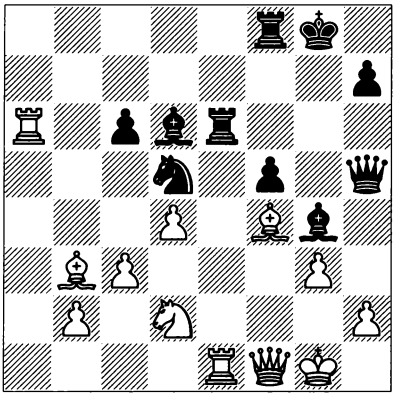
33 ♗c6 ♗d3!

This is simplest. White has nothing better than repeating the position with 34 ♗f3.

A2)

23 ♗xf4! *(D)*

B



This should be winning for White, but it will require some care.

23...♗xf4 24 ♖xe6! ♗xd2 25 ♗xd5

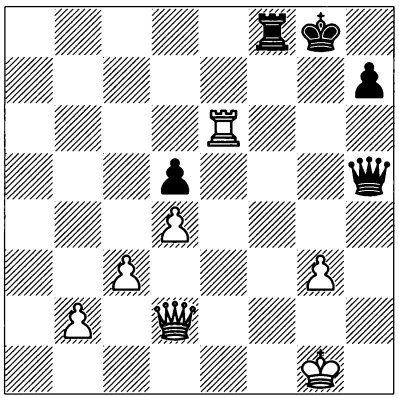
After 25 ♖e5 ♔h8 (not 25...♖b8? 26 ♖xc6! ♖xb3 27 ♕c4 and White wins, Karklins-Chow, Midwest Masters, Chicago 1982) 26 ♕f2 ♗g5 (26...♕g5? loses to 27 ♗xd5 cxd5 28 h4!) 27 ♖xc6 ♘f6 White is a lot of material up, but Black still has some chances on the kingside.

25...cxd5 26 ♕g2 f4 27 ♕xd2 ♗xe6

27...fxg3? 28 ♖f6! is just winning for White.

28 ♖xe6 fxg3 29 hxg3 *(D)*

B



29...♖f1+

29...♕g4(?) 30 ♖e3 ♖a8 31 ♕e2 +– was given by Nunn.

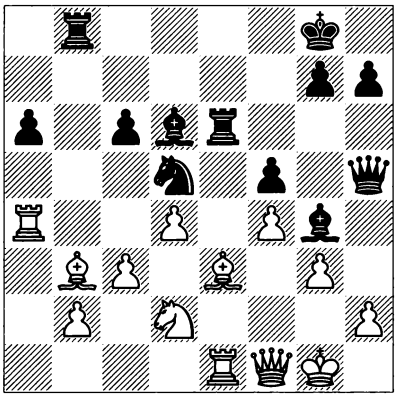
30 ♔xf1 ♕h1+ 31 ♔e2 ♕h5+

Strangely enough, White can only avoid perpetual check by shedding both his g-pawn and his rook. Still, after 32 g4 ♕xg4+ 33 ♔f2 ♕xe6 34 ♕g5+ ♔f7 35 ♕f4+ ♔g6 36 ♕g3+ ♔f7 37 b3 White soon obtains two connected passed pawns, which should be enough to win (Nunn).

B)

21...♖b8?! *(D)*

W



For a long time, this move took over as the main line. It looks very logical because Black threatens 22...♖xb3 (destroying the piece that is pinning everything on the a2-g8 diagonal) followed by capturing on e3.

22 ♗xd5

This is by far the most common move, but there are several others:

a) 22 ♕xa6 ♖xb3 23 ♘xb3 and at this point 23...♖xe3(?) was given as winning by Nunn, but 24 ♖xe3 ♘xe3 25 ♕c8+ ♗f8 26 ♖a8 ♕f7 27 ♘c5 leaves Black defenceless. However, 23...♕e8! wins back the material. After 24 ♕d3 ♘xe3 25 ♘c5 ♗xc5 26 dxc5 h6 27 ♖a7 ♘d5 28 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 Black stands well.

b) 22 ♕f2 ♖xb3 23 ♘xb3 ♗d1! is another one of Black's tricks. After 24 ♗d2 (not 24 ♖xa6 ♗xb3 25 ♖xc6?! ♘xe3 26 ♖xe3 ♕d1+ 27 ♕f1 ♕xf1+ 28 ♔xf1 ♖xe3 29 ♖xd6 ♗c4+ ∓) 24...♖xe1+ 25 ♕xe1 ♗xb3 26 ♖xa6 ♘e7 matters are not so clear, but Black should have good chances with White's king position so loose.

c) 22 ♖xa6 ♖xb3 23 ♘xb3 ♘xe3 24 ♖a8+ ♔f7 25 ♕f2 (25 ♕d3 ♗xf4 has the point that 26 gxf4? fails to 26...♗f3 –+) and now 25...♗h3?! 26 ♕e2 (even better is 26 ♖aa1!, when Black is in trouble) 26...♕xe2 27 ♖xe2 ♘c4 is given as ∓ by Nunn, but after 28 ♖xe6 ♔xe6 29 ♘a5 ♘xa5 30 ♖xa5 White is certainly not worse. Fortunately for Black, he has the odd-looking 25...♘d1! 26 ♕d2 (26 ♕f1 ♘e3) 26...♗xf4!, when White should deliver perpetual check with

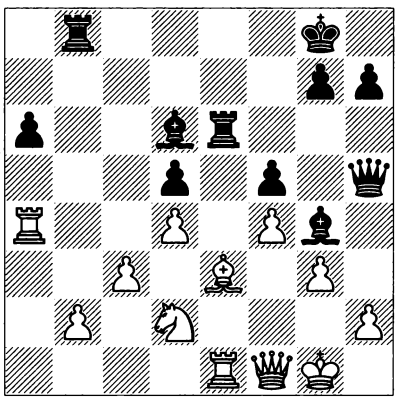
27 ♖a7+ ♔g8 28 ♖a8+ because 27 gxf4? loses to 27...♗e2!.

d) 22 ♗f2!? ♗e2! (not 22...♖xe1? 23 ♕xe1 ♖e8 24 ♕f1 ♖e2 25 ♖xa6 ♗h3 26 ♕d1 ♗g4 27 ♕f1 ♗h3 28 ♖xc6! ♗xf1 29 ♗xd5+ ♔f8 30 ♗f3 ♕e8 31 ♘xf1 ± Rohde-Beliavsky, Alicante 1978) and now:

d1) 23 ♕g2? and now 23...♖xb3! 24 ♘xb3 ♗f3 25 ♕f1 ♘xf4! (instead 25...♗e2 repeats) is an idea of Shamkovich's that modern analysis shows to be winning for Black: 26 gxf4 ♗xf4 27 ♗g3 ♗xg3 28 hxg3 f4! 29 ♖xe6 ♕h1+ 30 ♔f2 fxg3+ and Black wins.

d2) 23 ♗xd5 cxd5 24 ♕g2 is a better try for White: 24...♕f7 25 ♘f3 (25 ♕xd5?! ♗xf4 26 ♘f3 ♖xb2 27 ♖b4 ♖xb4 28 cxb4 ♖e4 29 ♕xf7+ ♔xf7 30 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 31 gxf4 = Muratović-Vitomskis, corr. 1985) 25...♕e8 26 ♘e5! (26 ♖aa1?! ♕b5 27 ♘e5 ♗xe5 28 dxe5 ♗d3 29 b4 ♗e4 30 ♕f1 ♗d3 ½-½ Usachy-Gabrans, corr. 1975) 26...♕xa4 27 ♕xd5 ♖e8 28 ♖xe2 gives White more than enough for the exchange.

22...cxd5 *(D)*



Black has enticed White to give up his light-squared bishop, but his position will prove to be rather loose. White has a complicated, yet pleasant choice:

B1: 23 ♕g2 45
B2: 23 ♖xa6 46

B1)

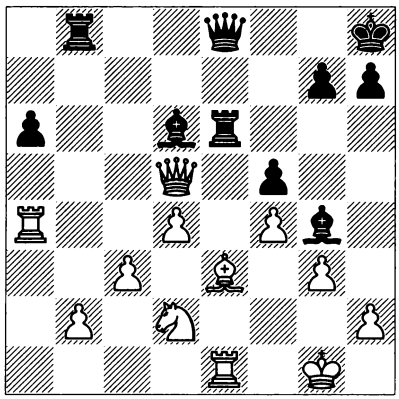
23 ♕g2

White activates his queen and targets the d5-pawn.

23...♕e8

Black cannot defend the pawn, so he tries to create pressure on the e-file, which has been weakened by two of White's major pieces leaving his first rank.

24 ♕xd5 ♔h8 *(D)*



25 ♔f2!

This move holds everything together and leaves Black struggling. Instead 25 ♘c4?! runs into 25...♗xf4!. After 26 gxf4 ♖g6 27 ♘d6 (27 ♔h1? loses to 27...♕d7 28 ♕g2 ♗h3) Black can head for a draw or play for a win with some risk:

a) 27...♗f3+ leaves White with little choice but to allow a draw with 28 ♔f1 ♗xd5 29 ♘xe8 ♖xb2 30 ♖e2 ♖b1+ 31 ♖e1 ♖b2 32 ♖e2 ♖b1+ 33 ♖e1 ½-½ Kamsky-J.Polgar, Linares 1994.

b) 27...♗h3+ 28 ♔f2 ♖xb2+ 29 ♖e2 ♖g2+ 30 ♕xg2 ♖xe2+ 31 ♔xe2 ♕h5+ 32 ♕f3 ♗g4 33 ♕xg4 fxg4 (Black needs this pawn to create counterplay, so 33...♕xg4+? 34 ♔d2 +– is out of the question) 34 ♔d3 ♕xh2 35 ♖xa6 ♕h1 36 ♖b6 h6 was unclear in Canfell-Blatny, Altensteig 1988.

25...g5

Also difficult is 25...♖xb2 26 ♖a2 ♖xa2 27 ♕xa2 g5 28 fxg5! f4 29 gxf4 ♗xf4 30 ♗xf4 ♖xe1 31 ♕xa6 ± City of London-City of Ruurlo, corr. 1987.

26 ♖xa6 ♖xb2 27 ♕a8!

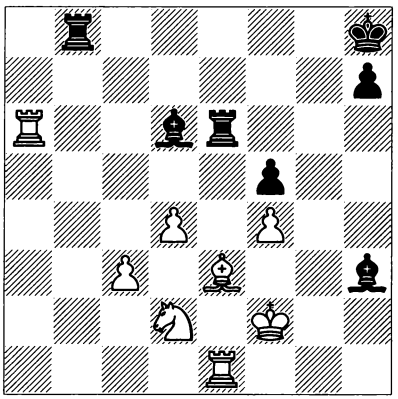
27 ♖a2?! gxf4 28 gxf4 ♖xa2 29 ♕xa2 ♗xf4 has been shown to be sufficient for Black.

27...♖b8 28 ♕c6 ♕h5 29 h3!

This little move comes up time and time again as an unusual tactical resource. White gains time to throw Black off balance.

29...♕xh3 30 ♕g2 gxf4 31 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 32 gxf4 *(D)*

B

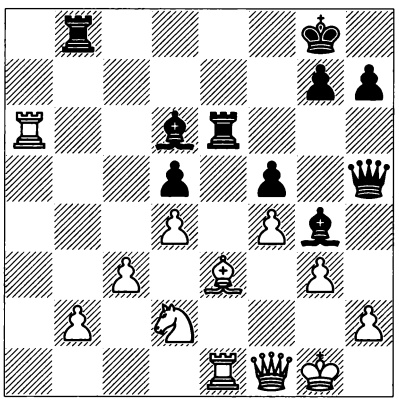


± Popolitov-Trushakov, corr. 1980-1.

B2)

23 ♖xa6 *(D)*

B



23...♖be8

Other moves are possible but Black still has problems:

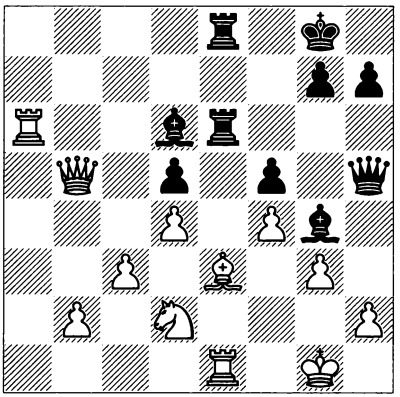
a) 23...♖xb2 24 ♕g2! ♖b5 25 c4 dxc4 26 ♕c6 ♕e8 27 ♕xe8+! (even stronger than 27 ♘xc4) 27...♖xe8 28 ♖xd6 c3 29 ♘c4 c2 30 ♘e5 +– P.Coleman-W.Schiller, corr. 1996.

b) 23...♕e8 24 ♗f2 ♕d7 25 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 and after 26 c4 dxc4 27 ♕xc4 ♕xc4 28 ♘xc4 ♗e2 29 ♖c6 ♗xc4 30 ♖xc4 ♖xb2 White was unable to win in Chandler-P.Littlewood, Lloyds Bank Masters, London 1987. 26 b4!? is one possible improvement for White.

24 ♕b5! *(D)*

This moves refutes Black's play, so we shall not bother looking at the alternatives 24 ♕f2 and 24 ♕g2.

B



24...♕f7

Everything is bad:

a) 24...♖xe3 25 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 26 ♖xd6 ♖e1+ 27 ♘f1 +– Grigoriev-Guzek, corr. 1990.

b) 24...♗f3 25 ♖xd6 ♖xe3 26 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 27 ♘xf3 ♕xf3 28 ♕xd5+ +–.

c) 24...♔h8 25 ♕xd5 ♖h6 26 ♕g2 ♗h3 27 ♕f2 +–.

25 h3!

Again this clever move. White gains time to direct his knight to the excellent e5-square. White must avoid the greedy 25 ♕xd5? ♖xe3 26 ♕xf7+ ♔xf7 27 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 28 ♖xd6 because 28...♖e1+ 29 ♘f1 ♗h3 suddenly turns the tables.

25...♗xh3

25...♗h5 26 ♕xd5 ♗xf4 27 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 28 ♘f1 +– Short-Pinter, European Clubs Cup, Rotterdam 1988.

26 ♘f3 h6

26...♖xe3 27 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 28 ♖xd6 h6 29 ♔f2 +–.

27 ♘e5 ♗xe5 28 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 29 dxe5 ±

Or even 29 ♗f2!? ±.

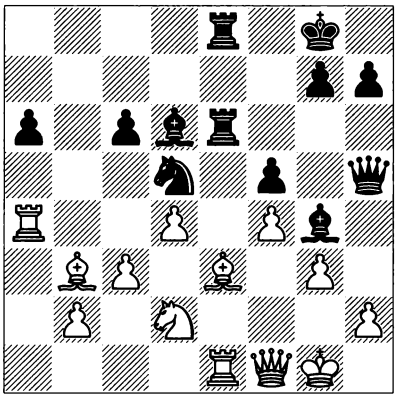
It looks like 21...♖b8 will not hold up, as both B1 and B2 cause major problems for Black.

C)

21...♖fe8 *(D)*

Black simply doubles rooks on the e-file. This is considered Black's best chance to keep the Main Line afloat. White can decimate Black's

W



queenside by sacrificing his e3-bishop or he can defend it. Note that 22 ♗f2? fails to 22...♖xe1 23 ♗xe1 ♖e2 –+. We examine:

C1: 22 ♖xa6 47
C2: 22 ♕f2 48

C1)

22 ♖xa6

This should probably lead to a draw.

22...♖xe3

This is Black's main continuation and looks good enough. Instead Black can play 22...♔h8?! 23 ♗xd5 cxd5 (as mentioned before, this line can also arise from the move-order 21...♔h8?! 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♖xa6, but it all looks very sketchy for Black), when White has:

a) 24 ♕f2 g5 25 ♖aa1! (25 ♖xd6!? ♖xd6 26 fxg5 ♖de6 27 h4 is also possible) 25...gxf4 26 ♗xf4 ♖e2 27 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 28 ♕xe2! ♗xe2 29 ♗xd6 ♗d3 30 ♖e1 ♗e4 31 b3 ± He.Müller-Huerga, corr. 2001.

b) 24 ♕b5 ♖h6 (24...g5 25 ♕xd5 gxf4 26 ♖xd6 ♖xe3 27 ♖xe3 fxe3 28 ♖d8 exd2 29 ♕e5+ ♔g8 30 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 31 ♕xe8+ ♔g7 32 ♕a4 d1♕+ 33 ♕xd1 ♗xd1 is given by Nunn and is probably a draw) when White has:

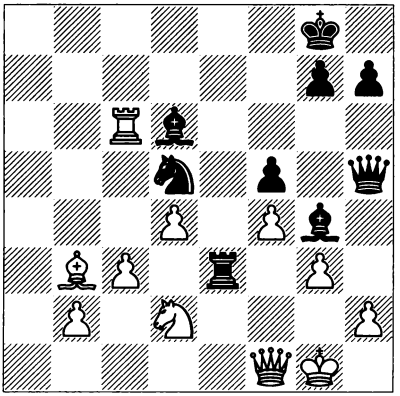
b1) 25 h4 ♗xf4 26 ♖xh6 (26 gxf4 ♖xa6 27 ♕xa6 ♕xh4 can only be better for Black) 26...♗xh6 27 ♘f1 f4 28 ♗d2 ♗e2 leads to a mess.

b2) 25 ♘f1 ♗f3 26 ♗c1 ♖f8 27 ♖e3 ♗e4 28 ♖c6 (not 28 ♕e2? ♕xe2 29 ♖xe2 ♗d3 30 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 31 ♖e3 ♗e4 ∓ Unzicker-Wahls, Bundesliga 1989/90) 28...♖g6 29 ♕a6 ♕h6 30 ♖e2 looked a little sketchy for Black in Unzicker-Nunn, Bundesliga 1990/1.

b3) 25 h3!? looks promising for White after 25...♗xh3 26 ♔f2. This has scored very well for White in correspondence play. The main point is that 26...♗g4 27 ♖h1! wins for White.

23 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 24 ♖xc6 *(D)*

B



This is the point of White's play. With one move White attacks both the d6-bishop and the d5-knight.

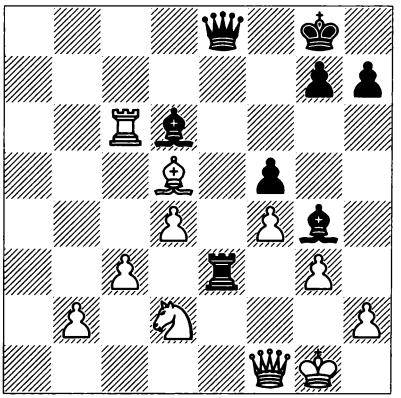
24...♕e8

Black cannot hold on to his extra piece and he is three pawns down so he must counterattack.

25 ♗xd5+ *(D)*

25 ♖xd6 is an attempt to keep some play in the game. After 25...♖e1 26 ♖xd5 ♔f8 27 ♖e5 ♖xf1+ 28 ♘xf1 ♕b8 29 ♘d2 ♕a8 Black has counterplay. Pavlović continues 30 ♘c4 ♗h3 31 ♘e3 ♕a1+ 32 ♔f2 ♕xb2+ 33 ♗c2 g6 34 ♖c5 ♗g4 35 ♖c8+ ♔g7 36 ♖c7+ ♔f8, with a likely draw.

B

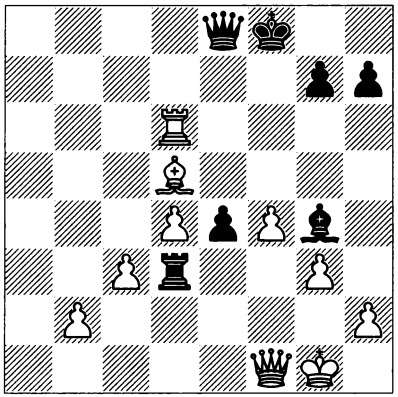


25...♔f8 26 ♘e4

26 ♖xd6 ♖e1 27 ♖e6 (or 27 ♗e6 ♖xf1+ 28 ♘xf1 ♕b8!) 27...♖xf1+ 28 ♘xf1 ♕b5 29 ♗g2 ♕xb2 gives Black good counterplay, as shown in several games.

26...fxe4 27 ♖xd6 ♖d3! *(D)*

W

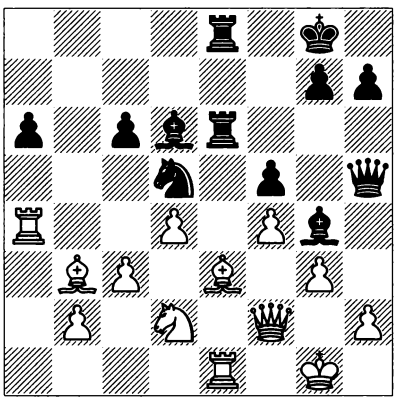


This position had been considered to be good for Black, despite the 3(!)-pawn deficit. Black threatens both 28...♖d1 and 28...e3. Nevertheless, White can draw with 28 ♖a6 (28 ♗b3 e3 is risky for White after 29 ♕xd3 e2 30 ♖e6 ♕xe6 31 ♗xe6 e1♕+ 32 ♔g2 ♕xe6 or 29 ♖d8?! ♕xd8 30 ♕xd3 e2) 28...♕b5 29 ♖a8+ ♔e7 30 ♖a7+ ♔d6 31 c4 ♕xb2 32 ♖a6+.

C2)

22 ♕f2 *(D)*

B



White defends the e3-bishop and is ready to start picking apart the queenside. Now 22...♔h8 can be met by 23 ♗xd5 (but not 23 ♘c4? ♘xf4! 24 gxf4 ♗f3 with a winning attack) 23...cxd5 24 c4!, when White will get his knight to e5 or play c5. Therefore Black must react violently.

22...g5!

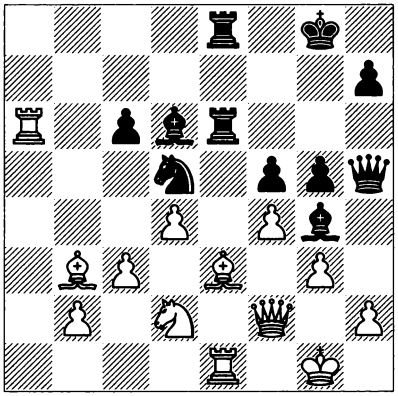
Once again a full-board war has erupted. White has the typical choice between blasting away the queenside and confronting Black on the kingside:

C21: 23 ♖xa6 48
C22: 23 fxg5 49

C21)

23 ♖xa6 *(D)*

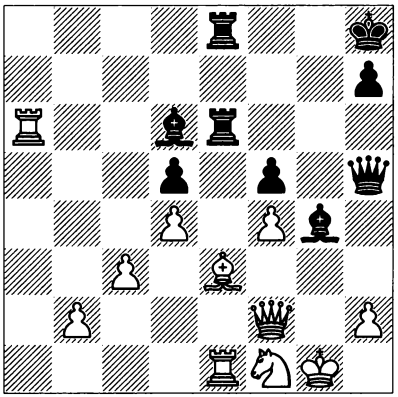
B



White mows down the queenside, confident that he can weather the storm on the other side of the board. Allowing the g-file to open up is risky, but White is counting on the manoeuvre ♘f1-g3 to hold things together.

23...gxf4 24 gxf4 ♔h8 25 ♗xd5 cxd5 26 ♘f1 *(D)*

B



26...♗h3!

Strangely enough, Black does not necessarily want to bring a rook to the g-file. Indeed, 26...♖g8 27 ♘g3 ♗f3 28 ♖a8! ♖eg6 29 ♖xg8+ ♖xg8 looks a little shaky for Black after 30 ♖a1! (30 ♖f1 ♗e4 31 ♖a1 ♕h3 32 ♖a6 ♗f8 33 ♖a8 h5 34 ♕e2 ♔h7 was He.Müller-Idler, corr. 1994 and here White should probably just repeat with 35 ♖a7+ ♔h8 36 ♖a8) 30...♕g4 31 ♖a6 (31 ♔f1 h5 32 ♖a6 ♖g6 33 ♔e1 h4 gave Black counterplay in Jaloszynski-Biedunkiewicz, corr. 1998) 31...♗xf4 32 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 33 ♖a1! (intending ♖f1) 33...♕g4 34 ♕e3 ♗e4 35 ♕h6 ± Glaser-Morgado, corr. 1987.

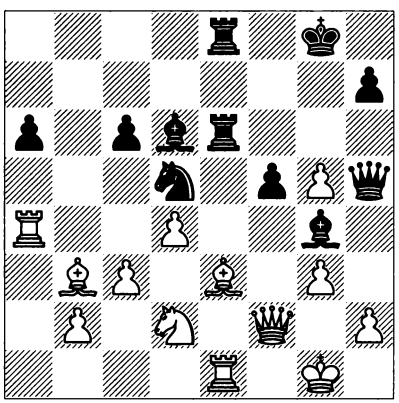
27 ♘g3 ♕g4

With ideas like ...h5 and ...♗xf4 in the air, Black has good counterplay.

C22)

23 fxg5 *(D)*

B



This is more critical. White is willing to go into a hand-to-hand fight in the kingside and centre.

23...f4

Black must go forward and tear up the white kingside.

24 gxf4 ♗h3

Black is a few pawns down, but there are ideas such as ...♗xf4, ...♕g4, ...♖f8, and even ...h6 to open more lines. White must be very careful.

25 ♔h1

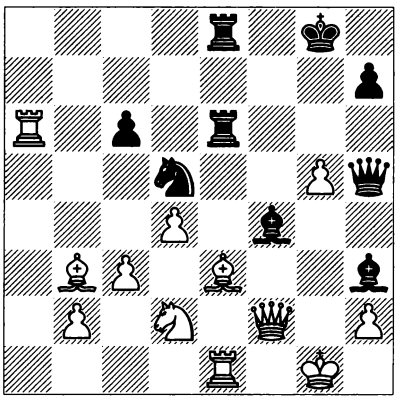
This is probably best. In 1990 Nunn wrote "A good line on move 25 for White is hard to find" and 20 years later after a lot of back and forth, the ball is still (or should I say 'again'?) in White's court. White has a few other moves, of which only one is worth considering:

a) 25 ♗d1? ♖xe3 26 ♗xh5 ♖xe1+ 27 ♘f1 ♗xf4! −+.

b) 25 ♘f1? ♗xf1 26 ♔xf1 ♗xf4! 27 ♗xd5 cxd5 28 ♕xf4 ♖f8 ∓.

c) 25 ♖xa6 has been seen a lot in correspondence play. After 25...♗xf4 *(D)* White has:

W

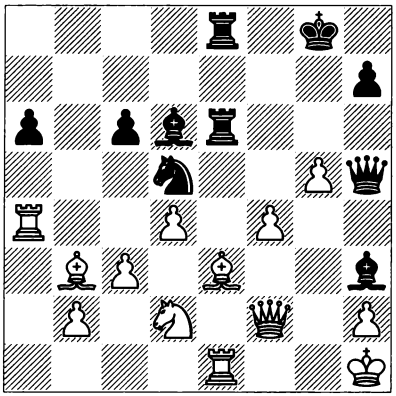


c1) 26 ♗xd5 ♕xg5+ (26...♕g4+ 27 ♔h1 cxd5 28 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 29 ♘f1 ♗xg5 30 ♗d2 ♗h4 31 ♘g3 ♗xg3 32 ♕xg3 ♕xg3 33 hxg3 ♖xe1+ 34 ♗xe1 leaves Black two pawns down although the game was eventually drawn in Fleck-Wegner, Bundesliga 1989/90; however, there is no need to go into this, even if it is objectively drawn) 27 ♕g3! (there is nothing else, but Black is still doing well) 27...cxd5 28 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 29 ♗xf4 ♖xe1+ 30 ♔f2 ♕xg3+ 31 ♔xg3 ♗e6 (or 31...♗f5). The endgame should be drawn, but if anyone is better it is Black.

c2) The queen sacrifice 26 ♕xf4! is White's best try, but 26...♘xf4 27 ♗xf4 ♕g4+ 28 ♗g3 ♔f8 (also possible is 28...♕xg5 29 ♘e4 ♕f5 30 ♘f2 {or 30 ♗e5 ♖f8 31 ♗xe6+ ♕xe6 32 ♖a7 ♕g6+ 33 ♘g3 ♖f7 34 ♖a8+ ♖f8 35 ♖a7 ½-½ Loc-Potrata, corr. 1997} 30...♕b5 31 ♗xe6+ ♗xe6 32 ♖a7 ♕f5 33 ♘e4 ♖f8 34 ♗e5 ♕g6+ 35 ♔h1 ♖f1+ 36 ♖xf1 ½-½ Sanner-Pansier, corr. 2002) 29 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 30 ♖xe6 (30 ♖a8+ ♔f7 31 ♖a7+ ♔g6 32 ♖xe6+ ♕xe6 33 ♔f2 ♕f5+ 34 ♔e1 does not help White much after 34...♕b5!) 30...♕xe6 31 ♔f2 ♕f5+ 32 ♔e1 ♗g4 gave Black good counterplay in Kloepping-Schwetlick, corr. 2002.

We return to 25 ♔h1 *(D)*:

B



Now:

a) After 25...♕g4?! White has:

a1) 26 ♘f3?? ♖xe3 −+ R.Junge-Wegner, Bundesliga 1988/9.

a2) 26 ♗xd5? cxd5 27 ♖g1 ♕f5 28 ♖g3 ♗xf4 (Hasche-Stock, corr. 1991) 29 ♗xf4 ♖e1+ 30 ♖g1 ♖8e2 −+.

a3) 26 ♖g1? is met by 26...♕f5! with a strong initiative. For example, 27 ♖xa6 ♖xe3 28 ♖xc6 ♖e2 ∓ or 27 ♗xd5? ♕xd5+ −+.

a4) 26 ♘c4! (the knight heads for e5 and covers the e3-bishop at the same time) 26...♕xf4 (the only chance) 27 ♘e5! ♕e4+ 28 ♔g1. It looks like Black still has problems here after either 28...♗xe5 29 dxe5 ♕xe5 30 ♖xa6 or 28...♖f8 29 ♕g3 (29 ♗c2 is also good) 29...♕f5 30 ♖aa1!.

b) Following 25...♗xf4, Pavlović gives the forcing line 26 ♗xd5 cxd5 27 ♕xf4 ♖xe3 28 ♖g1 ♖e2 29 g6 hxg6 30 ♖xa6 ♗g2+ 31 ♖xg2 ♖xg2 32 ♔xg2 ♕e2+ 33 ♔g3 ♕xa6 34 ♘f3 ♕e6 35 ♘e5 ♔g7 with approximate equality.

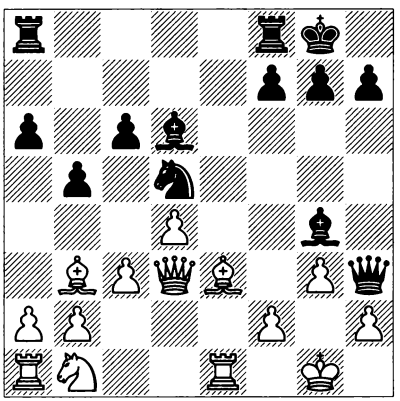
Conclusions

Black has two ways to reach the Old Main Line. Currently 18...f5?! looks a bit suspicious because of 19 axb5!?. Perhaps Black can hold here somehow, but it will certainly be an unpleasant task. 18...bxa4 is a safer move-order, because 21 c4 looks dangerous for White and 21 ♖xa6 does not look fatal. Once we are in the Main Line, both players must walk a tightrope. Even though this line is supposed to favour White theoretically, we can see that matters are not clear at all. There are many pitfalls for both sides and the lines are well worth studying to learn the plethora of typical Marshall Attack ideas. The rare 21...g5 could be worth a roll of the dice. Instead 21...♖b8?! is looking rather suspicious, but 21...♖fe8 is holding up pretty well.

3 15 ♗e3: Other Lines

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 *(D)*

B



In this chapter we look at deviations for both sides in the 15 ♗e3 line.

The first two of these look at 'pawn push' variations where Black throws his f-pawn forward without playing his rook to e6 first. The first of these lines, the Accelerated Pawn Push, even does without ...♖ae8, although if Black plays this move later it will often transpose to the Pawn Push of Section 3.2. Both of these variations are quite risky for Black but could be very dangerous against an ill-prepared opponent. There is a sea of transpositions and hopefully I have successfully navigated through them.

The third line covered here is the Adams Variation. Essentially this is an 'Accelerated' Spassky Variation, as Black has omitted the move ...♖e6. This variation is quite popular, and has been played frequently by Marshall experts Leko, Grishchuk and Gustafsson. The fourth part of this chapter covers the main move 17...♖e6 where White plays something other than the most common move, 18 a4.

Section 3.1: The Accelerated Pawn Push 16...f5 51

Section 3.2: The Pawn Push 16...♖ae8 17 ♘d2 f5 54

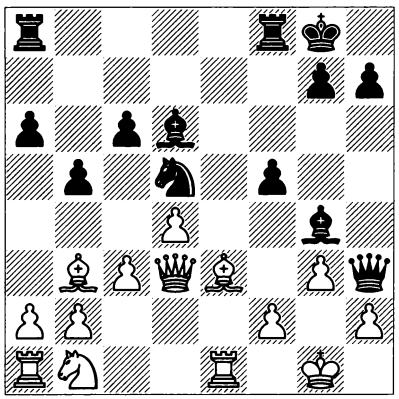
Section 3.3: The Adams Variation 16...♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♕h5 60

Section 3.4: White Avoids 18 a4 65

Section 3.1: The Accelerated Pawn Push 16...f5

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 f5 *(D)*

W



This risky advance could be quite troubling for an unprepared player. Black bets everything on a direct attack. It will often transpose to Section 3.2 so here we shall only cover independent variations.

17 f4

After 17 ♕f1 Black can head for the main lines with 17...♕h5 or go into an ending with 17...♕xf1+. Black gets good compensation after either 18 ♖xf1 f4 19 gxf4 ♗xf4 20 ♘d2 ♗c7 or 18 ♔xf1 f4 19 gxf4 ♗xf4 20 ♔g1 ♗c7. After the further 21 ♘d2 ♖f6 22 ♘e4 ♖g6 23 ♘g3 ♖f8 24 ♗c2 ♗f5! 25 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 26 ♗d2 h5 27 ♖e4 ♗f4 28 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 29 ♔f1 ♖f8 30

♖d1 ♘h3 31 ♖d2 ♘g5 Black was clearly better in Kindermann-I.Sokolov, Biel 1988.

17...g5

Continuing the brute-force approach. Instead 17...♖ae8 18 ♘d2 heads for Section 3.2, while 17...♔h8 18 ♗xd5 (18 ♘d2 runs into 18...♘xf4! 19 gxf4? {19 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 20 ♗d1 =} 19...♗xf4 20 ♘f1 ♗f3 21 ♕d2 ♕g4+, when White can resign) 18...cxd5 19 ♘d2 g5 20 ♕f1 ♕h5 transposes to the main line.

18 ♕f1

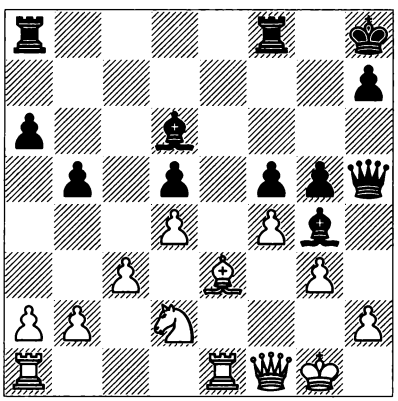
Not, of course, 18 fxg5? ♗xg3!, when Black wins.

18...♕h5 19 ♘d2 ♔h8

The pressure on e3 and f4 induces White to take on d5.

20 ♗xd5 cxd5 *(D)*

W



We have a position similar to those in Chapter 2, but here Black has started pawn-play with his queen's rook still on a8.

Now White faces a common choice. He can immediately begin his counterplay on the queenside or he can try to make Black prove his case on the kingside.

A: 21 a4 52
B: 21 fxg5!? 53

A)

21 a4 bxa4

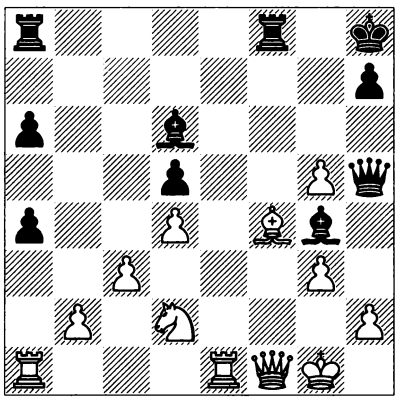
21...♖ae8?! 22 axb5 axb5 transposes to Line B1 in Section 3.2, which is dubious for Black.

22 fxg5

22 ♖xa4 ♖ae8 transposes to Line B2 in Section 3.2, while 22 c4 ♖ab8 23 ♖ab1 ♗h3 24 ♕f2 ♕g4 25 cxd5 gxf4 26 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 27 ♕xf4 ♕xf4 28 gxf4 ♖b4 gave Black good compensation in the endgame in Short-Ehlvest, World Cup, Skellefteå 1989.

22...f4 23 ♗xf4 *(D)*

B



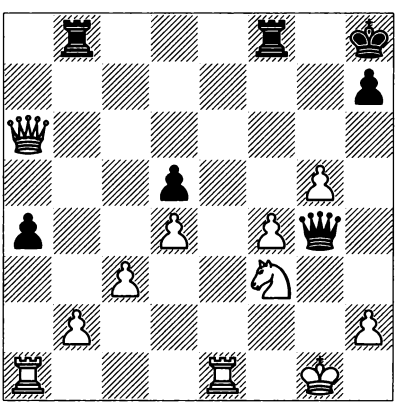
23...♖xf4?!

Back in 1989 Nunn recommended 23...♗xf4 24 gxf4 ♖ab8, "when it is not clear if White can prove any advantage". This has been tried since then and it seems that Nunn was right and this is a better choice. White has tried:

a) 25 ♖a2 ♗h3 26 ♕e2 ♕xe2 27 ♖xe2 ♖xf4 28 ♖e3 ♖g4+ 29 ♖g3 ♖xg3+ 30 hxg3 ♗g4 = looks sufficient for Black.

b) 25 ♕xa6 ♗f3 26 ♘xf3 and now not 26...♕xf3? 27 ♕e2 ± Berzinš-Weegenaar, corr. 1994. Instead of recapturing on f3, Black has the surprising 26...♕g4+! *(D)*.

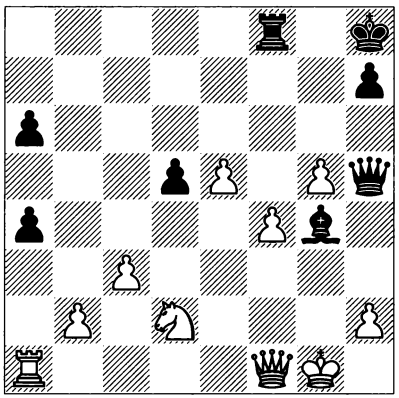
W



After 27 ♔f2 ♕xf4 White must play with great care: 28 ♕e6! (the only move) 28...♕xf3+ 29 ♔g1 ♖xb2 30 ♕e5+ ♔g8 31 ♕g3 ♕xg3+ 32 hxg3 ♖a8 should lead to a draw.

24 gxf4 ♖f8 25 ♖e5 ♗xe5 26 dxe5 *(D)*

B



Now:

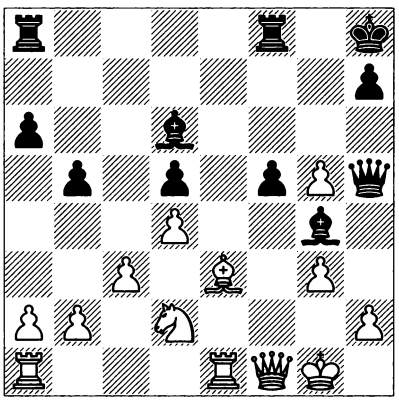
a) 26...h6?! 27 ♕xa6! hxg5 28 ♕d6! ♖xf4 29 ♖f1! ♗f5 30 ♕xd5 ♗h3 31 ♖xf4 gxf4 32 ♕f3 ± Sax-Ehlvest, World Cup, Skellefteå 1989. The attack is spent.

b) 26...♗e2!? 27 ♕g2 ♖xf4 and here 28 ♕xd5?! allows 28...♖g4+ 29 ♔h1 ♕xg5, forcing a draw, while after 28 ♔h1, both 28...♖f5 and 28...♗b5 retain drawing chances.

B)

21 fxg5!? *(D)*

B



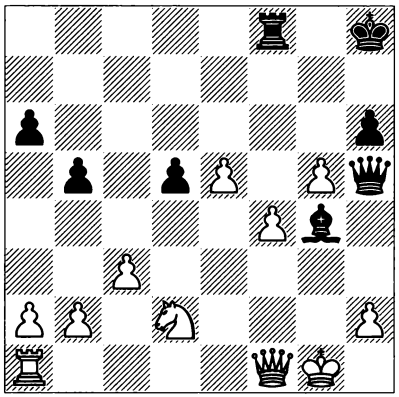
White is not afraid of a direct fight, especially considering the lack of pressure on the e-file.

21...f4 22 ♗xf4 ♖xf4

Black has to go in for this to fuel his attack. Black gives up more material but his a8-rook will quickly join the fray. 22...♗xf4? 23 gxf4 ♗h3 24 ♕e2 ♕xe2 25 ♖xe2 ♖xf4 26 ♘f1 ♖g4+ 27 ♘g3 ♖xg5 28 ♖ae1 ♖ag8 29 ♖e5 was just winning for White in Neishtadt-Antosz, corr. 1959.

23 gxf4 ♖f8 24 ♖e5! ♗xe5 25 dxe5 h6 *(D)*

W



Black must play this to open the position. This may still be insufficient, but White must take some care.

26 ♖e1

This is the main continuation, but it is not clear if it is best.

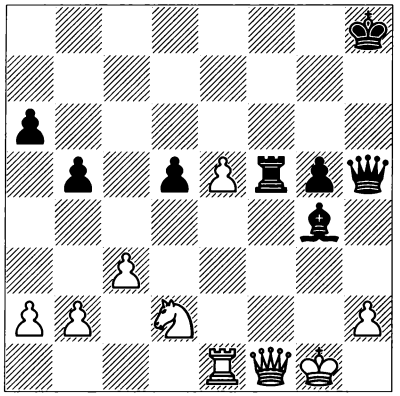
a) 26 gxh6? ♖g8 27 ♔f2 ♕xh2+ 28 ♔e3 d4+! (28...♕g3+? 29 ♔d4 ♖f8 chases the king, but fails to mate it) 29 cxd4 (29 ♔d3 dxc3) 29...♕g3+ 30 ♔e4 ♗f5+! 31 ♔d5 (31 ♔xf5 ♕g6#) 31...♕g6 with a winning attack.

b) 26 a4 hxg5 27 axb5 and now 27...♗e2?! 28 ♕g2! gxf4 29 ♔h1 is clearly better for White, but the immediate 27...gxf4!? looks like a superior try.

c) 26 ♕f2 hxg5 27 ♕c5 ♖xf4 28 ♖f1 ♗f3 29 ♕c8+ ♔g7 30 ♘xf3 ♖xf3 31 ♕d7+ ♔h6 32 ♕e6+ ♔g7 33 ♕e7+ ♔h6 34 ♕d6+ ♔g7 35 ♕c7+ ♔h6 36 ♕c6+ ♔g7 37 ♕b7+ ♔h8 38 ♕a8+ ♔g7 39 ♕a7+ and now Black can improve over 39...♔h8? 40 ♖xf3 ♕xf3 41 ♕d4 ± Aseev-Frolov, St Petersburg 1995 with 39...♔g8 40 ♖xf3 ♕xf3 41 ♕d4 ♔f7, when the king will come to e6 and Black should hold without much trouble.

d) 26 e6! looks quite strong. 26...hxg5 (or 26...♗xe6 27 ♕e1 ♗h3 28 ♕e5+ ♔h7 29 ♔h1 ±) 27 e7 ♖xf4 28 ♕d3 ♗d7 29 ♖e1 ♗c6 30 ♘f1 ♔g7 31 ♘g3 ♕f7 32 ♖e5 ♔f6 33 ♕e3 ♗e8 34 h4 1-0 Christoffel-Gaertig, corr. 1989.

26...hxg5 27 f5! ♖xf5 *(D)*

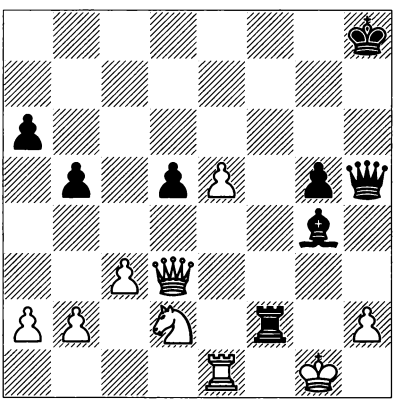


28 ♕d3

White has also tried 28 ♕g2 which looks even better. After 28...♗h3 29 ♕e2 ♕h4 (29...♗g4 30 ♕e3 +–) 30 e6 ♖f4 31 ♔h1 ♖f2 32 ♕e5+ ♔h7 33 e7 ♗d7 White has the cute 34 ♘f3! ♖xf3 35 e8♕ ♗xe8 36 ♕xe8 ♖f6 37 ♖e7+ ♔h6 38 ♕h8+ ♔g6 39 ♕g7+ ♔f5 40 ♖e2 ±.

28...♖f2! *(D)*

28...♗h3 is worse, but not for the reasons given in most books. After 29 e6 ♖f4 White should play 30 e7! (instead of 30 ♕e2 ♖g4+ 31 ♔h1 ♗g2+ 32 ♕xg2 ♖xg2 33 ♔xg2 ♕g4+ {not 33...♕e8? 34 e7 +–} 34 ♔h1 ♕h4! =, when White's rook does not have a secure square on the e-file) 30...♖g4+ 31 ♔f2 ♖g2+ 32 ♔e3 and White's king escapes, leaving him with a decisive advantage.



29 h3

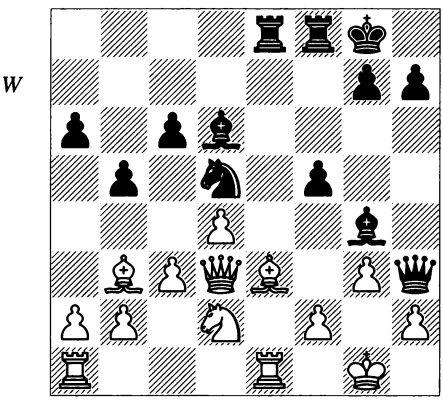
Taking the rook loses, while 29 ♘f1 should also lead to a draw after 29...♖xb2 30 ♕xd5 (worse is 30 e6?! ♗f3 31 ♕d4+ ♔g8 32 ♘d2 ♕h3 33 ♕f2 ♕g4+ 34 ♔f1 ♗g2+ 35 ♕xg2 ♕xg2+ 36 ♔xg2 ♖xd2+ 37 ♔f3 ♔f8 with a slight advantage for Black) 30...♗f3 31 ♕d8+ ♔g7 32 ♕f6+ with perpetual check. Note that 32 ♕d7+? is worse because of 32...♕f7!, when only Black has winning chances. White has to exchange queens because of the ...♖g2+ threat.

29...♕h4 30 ♖f1 ♗f5 31 ♕e3 ♖xf1+ 32 ♘xf1 ♗xh3 33 e6 ♕g4+

½-½ A.Sokolov-Ehlvest, World Cup, Rotterdam 1989.

Section 3.2: The Pawn Push 16...♖ae8 17 ♘d2 f5

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 f5 *(D)*



Here Black prefers to develop his rook before launching a pawn attack. This line is a little more controlled than that in Section 3.1, but it is still risky.

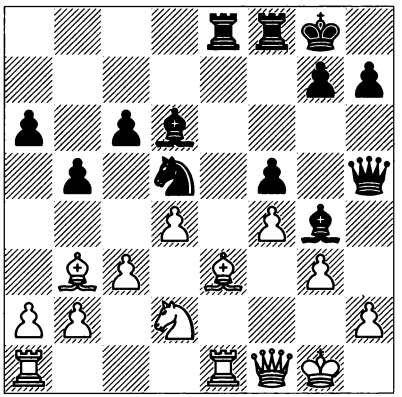
18 ♕f1

We shall take this as the main line because it has been the preferred move-order amongst the elite. 18 ♗xd5+ cxd5 19 f4 g5 20 ♕f1 ♕h5 21 ♕g2 ♔h8 transposes to the main line, while the most common move 18 f4 will also transpose after 18...♔h8 (or 18...g5 19 ♕f1 ♕h5) 19 ♗xd5 cxd5, if play continues 20 ♕f1 ♕h5. Instead 20 a4 bxa4 (20...g5 21 ♕f1 ♕h5 again is a transposition to the main lines) 21 ♕xa6 ♖xe3! 22 ♖xe3 ♗xf4 23 ♘f1 ♗xe3+ 24 ♘xe3 ♗f3 25

♕d6 ♖e8 26 ♖xa4 ♕h5 gives Black enough play for the pawn.

18...♕h5 19 f4 *(D)*

B



19...♔h8

Black can also play 19...g5?!, but this does not seem to work. White has:

a) 20 ♗xd5+ cxd5 will just lead to the main lines: 21 ♕g2 ♔h8 is Line A1.

b) 20 a4 bxa4 (20...♔h8 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 transposes to Line B1) 21 ♗xd5+ cxd5 22 ♖xa4? (22 ♕g2 is better, but unexplored) 22...gxf4 23 gxf4 (23 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 24 ♖xe8 ♕xe8! hits the a4-rook) 23...♖f6 (23...♔h8, intending ...♖g8, is also very strong) 24 ♕f2 ♖g6 25 ♔h1 ♗h3 is winning for Black, Vazquez-Granda, San Fernando 1991.

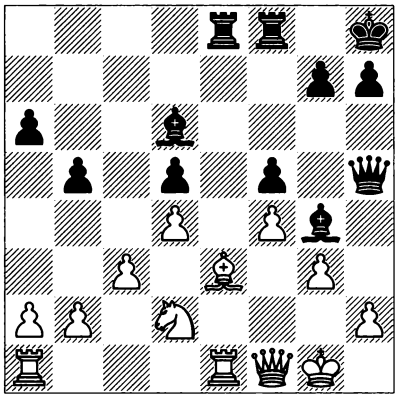
c) 20 fxg5 ♖xe3 21 ♖xe3 f4 22 ♖f3! (we shall see this idea again) 22...♗xf3 23 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 24 ♘xf3 fxg3 25 ♔g2 gxh2 26 ♘xh2 ♗xh2 27 ♔xh2 ♖f2+ 28 ♔g3 ♖xb2 29 ♗xd5+ cxd5 30 ♔f4 ♖e2 31 a4 bxa4 32 ♖xa4 ♖e6 is given by de Jongh as only marginally favouring White, but after 33 ♖a5 he is much better.

d) 20 ♕g2 gxf4 (20...♔h8 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 is Line A1 below) 21 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 (worse is 21...cxd5 22 ♕xd5+) 22 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 23 ♗xc6 ♗e3+ 24 ♔h1 ♖e6 (not 24...♗h3 25 ♕e2 +–) 25 ♗f3 f4 (or 25...♗xd2 26 ♗xg4 ♖xe1+ 27 ♖xe1 fxg4 28 ♕xd2 ♕d5+ 29 ♔g1 ♕xa2 30 d5 +–) 26 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 27 ♕f3 ♕g7 was Dolmatov-Blatny, Pardubice 1993. Now best is 28 gxf4 ♖xf4 29 ♕xf4 ♗xf4 30 ♖xe6 ♕d7 31 ♖e2 with a winning ending – Blatny.

20 ♗xd5 cxd5 *(D)*

Compared to the main lines of the previous chapter, Black's rook is still on e8 because he

W



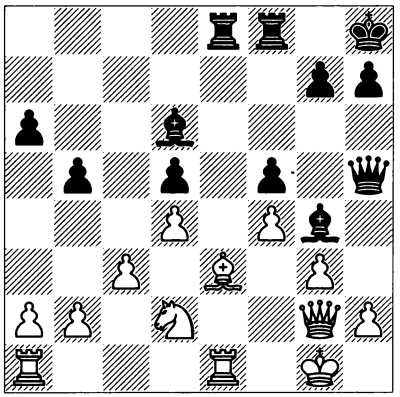
has spent a tempo on ...♔h8 to entice ♗xd5. Even though White has given up his bishop, he must often do this anyway and Black's inability to double rooks quickly gives White time to counterattack. Here he has a choice:

A: 21 ♕g2 55
B: 21 a4 57

A)

21 ♕g2 *(D)*

B



The d5-pawn cannot be conveniently protected, so Black must leave it to its fate or try a speculative exchange sacrifice that we have seen before. We examine two possibilities for Black:

A1: 21...g5 55
A2: 21...♖e4 56

A1)

21...g5

Black plays for maximum confusion. However if White stays cool, he is certainly not without resources himself.

22 ♕xd5

White could also try 22 fxg5, and here:

a) 22...♖xe3 23 ♖xe3 f4 24 ♖f3! ♗xf3 25 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 26 ♘xf3 fxg3 27 ♔g2 gxh2 28 ♘xh2 ♗xh2 29 ♔xh2 ♖f2+ 30 ♔g3 ♖xb2 31 ♔f4 is the same as the ending as in note 'c' to Black's 19th move above, but Black's king is even worse on h8 than g8.

b) 22...♖e4 23 ♘xe4 (23 h4 ♖ee8 24 ♕f2 f4 25 gxf4 is given as +– by Bennedik, but maybe Black can make 25...♖xe3 work after 26 ♖xe3 ♖xf4 or 26 ♕xe3 ♗xf4) 23...fxe4 24 ♖f1 ♗f3 and now Bruckel-Bennedik, corr. 1998 concluded 25 ♖xf3 (25 ♕d2? ♕h3! is good for Black: 26 ♕f2? h5! 27 gxh6 ♖g8 –+ or 26 g6? ♗xg3! 27 g7+ ♔xg7 28 ♗h6+ ♔h8 29 ♗xf8 ♗f4!) 25...♖xf3 26 ♗d2 e3 27 ♗e1 ♕g4 28 a4 bxa4 29 ♕c2 e2 30 ♗f2 ♖xg3+ ½-½.

22...♖d8

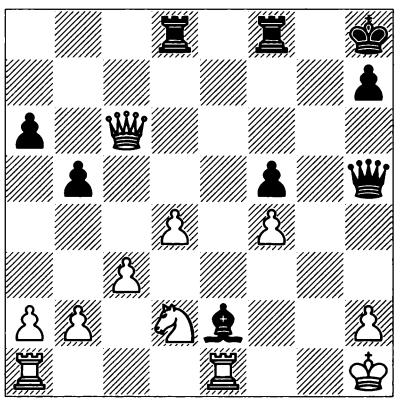
22...gxf4? 23 ♕xd6 fxe3 24 ♖xe3 wins for White because Black's rook is loose on f8.

23 ♕c6 gxf4 24 ♗xf4

Not 24 gxf4? ♖g8.

24...♗xf4 25 gxf4 ♗e2 26 ♔h1 *(D)*

B



26...♖de8

After 26...♖d6? Nunn gives 27 ♕g2, but White has even better in 27 ♕xd6! ♗f3+ 28 ♔g1 ♖g8+ 29 ♔f2 ♕xh2+ 30 ♔e3 ♖e8+ 31 ♔d3 ♗e4+ 32 ♘xe4 fxe4+ 33 ♔e3 ♕g3+ 34 ♔d2, winning as there is no perpetual check.

27 ♖g1

27 ♕g2 ♖e3 gives Black enough activity. For example, 28 ♖g1 ♗g4 29 ♖ae1 ♖fe8 30 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 31 ♕a8+ ♖e8 32 ♕c6 ♖e2 33 ♖g2 (33 ♕f6+ ♔g8 34 ♘f3 ♕h3 35 ♕d8+ ♔g7 36 ♖g3 ♕f1+ 37 ♘g1 ♖xb2 is also OK for Black) 33...♖e1+ ½-½ Popović-Nunn, World Team Ch, Lucerne 1989.

27...♕h4 28 ♘f3!

Instead 28 ♕d6 ♗g4 29 ♖ae1 (29 ♖af1 ♗e2) 29...♕f2 30 ♖xe8 ♗f3+ is a perpetual, while 28 ♕g2 ♖g8 29 ♕c6 ♖gf8 30 ♕g2 ♖g8 31 ♕c6 was drawn in A.Sokolov-Nunn, World Cup, Rotterdam 1989.

28...♕xf4 29 ♘g5! ♕e3

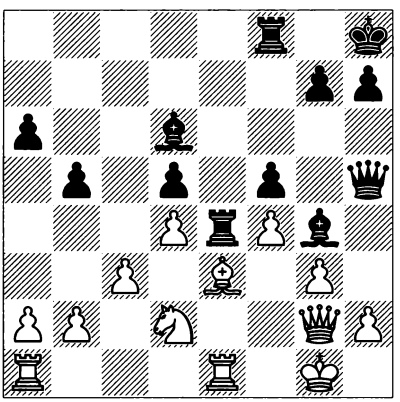
Not 29...♗g4? 30 ♘f7+ ♔g7 31 ♖af1 +– (A.Sokolov).

After 29...♕e3, both 30 ♖g2 and 30 ♖g3, intending to double on the g-file and perhaps advance the d-pawn, leave Black with problems.

A2)

21...♖e4 *(D)*

W



Black offers an exchange to obtain light-square domination. This idea is very attractive, and even though it is rather speculative, Black really burned his bridges anyway when playing the Pawn Push. In any case, this seems like the best try.

22 ♘xe4

22 h4 h6 23 ♘xe4 fxe4 will transpose, while 22 a4 is also possible. Black should reply 22...bxa4, transposing to Line B2 below, because after 22...g5 23 fxg5 (or 23 ♘xe4 fxe4 24 fxg5) 23...♗h3 24 ♕f3 ♖g4 25 axb5 f4 26 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 27 bxa6 ♕xg5 28 a7 Black has problems:

a) 28...♕g8 is given by Harding but after Nunn's recommendation 29 ♔h1 White is better: 29...♗xd2 30 ♕xf8 ♕xf8 31 a8♕ ♖g8 32 ♕xf8 ♖xf8 33 ♖e2 ±.

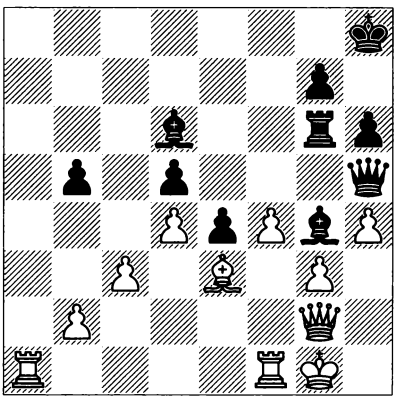
b) 28...♖a8 and now 29 ♖e8+(?) ♖xe8 30 a8♕ ♖xa8 31 ♖xa8+ ♔g7 32 ♖a7+ is a draw – Nunn. However, 29 ♘e4! dxe4 (otherwise 30 ♘f2 +–) 30 ♖xe4 looks winning for White.

22...fxe4 23 h4 h6 24 ♖f1 ♖f6

Insufficient is 24...g5?! 25 ♕h2 gxf4 26 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 27 ♖xf4 ♗xf4 28 gxf4 e3 29 ♕g3 e2 30 ♔f2 ♕f5 31 h5 +– Klover-Kant, Ostrava 1981.

25 a4 ♖g6 26 axb5 axb5 *(D)*

W



Now Topalov suggested 27 ♖a7, while after 27 f5 ♗xf5 28 ♗f4 ♗e7 29 ♗e5 ♗xh4, White has a choice:

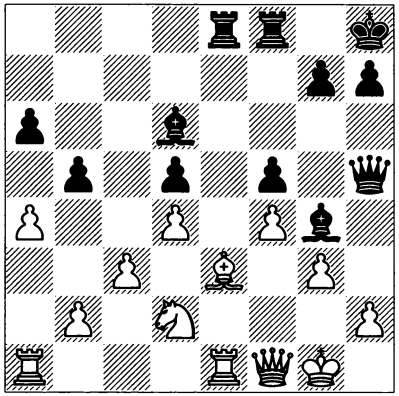
a) 30 ♖a7 ♗xg3?! (30...♗f6 31 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 32 ♖f4 ♖g6 with compensation, Ganin-Arias Duval, corr. 2003) 31 ♗xg3 e3 32 ♖e7 ♗e4 33 ♖e8+?! (33 ♖f8+ ♔h7 34 ♖xe4 looks better, as then ...e2 won't hit the rook) 33...♔h7 34 ♖xe4 dxe4 35 ♕xe4 e2! (not 35...♕h3? 36 ♖f3 e2 37 ♕b1! h5 38 ♔f2 h4 39 ♗e5 ♕g2+ 40 ♔e3 1-0 Anand-Topalov, Las Palmas 1993) 36 ♖e1 (not 36 ♖f3? e1♕+) 36...♕h3 and Black wins back the piece with no problems.

b) 30 ♕h2!? e3 31 ♖a7 ♗d3 and now 32 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 33 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 34 ♕xh4 ♕xh4 35 gxh4 ♗xf1 36 ♔xf1 only liquidates to a drawn pawn ending, but 32 ♖e1 seeks more: 32...♕f3 (32...♕xe5 33 dxe5 ♗xg3 34 ♕xg3 ♖xg3+ 35 ♔h2) 33 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ 34 ♔xg2 ♗e4+ 35 ♔h3.

B)

21 a4 *(D)*

B



White prefers to activate his rook rather than spending time with his queen hunting the d5-pawn. Black has a decision to make between two thematic ideas:

B1: 21...g5?! 57
B2: 21...bxa4 58

B1)

21...g5?!

This is the most direct, but it is probably dubious.

22 axb5 axb5 23 fxg5

Other moves are less testing:

a) 23 ♖a6?! gxf4 24 ♗xf4 gives Black a pleasant choice:

a1) 24...♗h3 25 ♖xe8 (25 ♕f2? ♖xe1+ 26 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 27 gxf4 and now 27...♖g8+ or 27...♕g4+) 25...♗xf1 26 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 27 ♘xf1 gives White sufficient compensation for the queen, but no more than that.

a2) 24...♖xe1 25 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 26 gxf4 ♗e2 27 ♘f1 ♕f3 28 ♕f2 ♕d3 29 ♘g3 ♕d1+ 30 ♔g2 ♗d3 gives Black good attacking chances according to Nunn.

b) 23 ♕f2 is interesting. After 23...h6 White has:

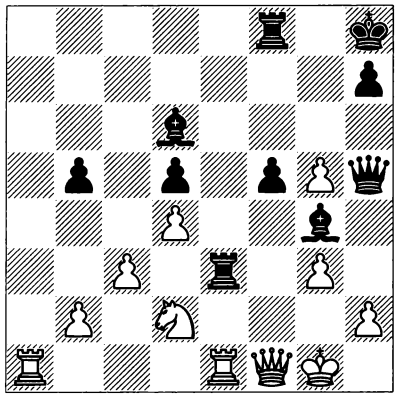
b1) 24 ♘f1 ♖e4! – Nunn.

b2) 24 b3 ♖g8 25 c4 ♗h3 26 fxg5 hxg5 and now 27 ♖a6(?) ♗b4 intending ...f4 is given by Nunn, but White may improve here, perhaps with 27 c5.

b3) 24 ♖a6 ♖e6 25 ♘b3 gxf4 26 ♖xd6 (26 ♗xf4 ♖xe1+ 27 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 28 gxf4 ♗e2! 29 h3 b4 ∓) 26...♖xd6 27 ♗xf4 gives White compensation for the exchange.

23...♖xe3 *(D)*

W



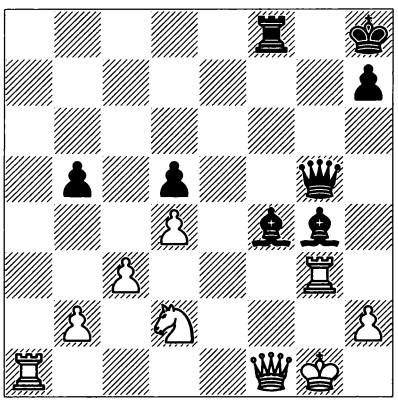
Black breaks down the defence of the dark squares. While the attack may be strong enough to win back material, Black will still be struggling.

24 ♖xe3 f4 25 gxf4 ♗xf4 26 ♖g3

26 ♕f2 is another possibility, although after 26...♕xg5 27 ♔h1 ♗f5 28 ♖ae1 ♗xe3 29 ♖xe3 it may not be so easy for White to win.

26...♕xg5 *(D)*

W



27 ♔h1

After 27 ♘f3? Black has the amazing reply 27...♕g8!! −+ (instead of 27...♕g7? 28 ♖a7! ♕xa7 29 ♖xg4), which wins after 28 ♖xg4 ♕xg4+ 29 ♕g2 ♗e3+ 30 ♔h1 ♕xf3.

The text-move was investigated in detail in the late 1980s and the analysis by Nunn and others has held up very well.

27...♗d6

27...♖g8 28 ♘f3 ♕f5 and now 29 ♘e5 was given by Nunn, while 29 ♘h4 may be even better after 29...♕g5 30 ♖g2 or 29...♕e4+ 30 ♘g2.

28 ♕g2 ♗xg3 29 ♕xg3 h5

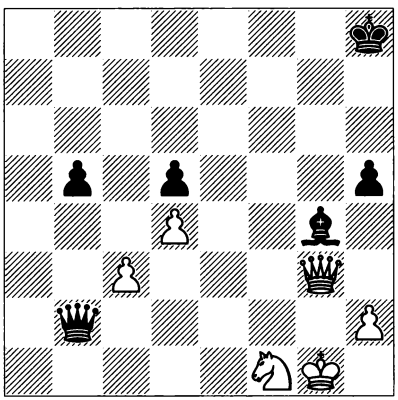
Or 29...♕xd2 30 ♕xg4 ♖g8 31 ♕f3 ♕g5 32 ♖f1 ± Nunn.

30 ♖f1 ♖xf1+

Nunn gives 30...♖g8 31 h3 ♕xd2 32 ♕e5+ ♖g7 33 hxg4 hxg4 34 ♕h5+ ♔g8 35 ♕xd5+ ♔h7 36 ♕f5+ intending ♖f2 ±.

31 ♘xf1 ♕c1 32 ♔g1 ♕xb2 *(D)*

W



This endgame is critical for the Pawn Push. White has excellent winning chances.

33 h3 ♗d1 34 ♘e3 ♕b1 35 ♔g2

After 35 ♕e5+?! ♔h7 36 ♕f5+ ♕xf5 37 ♘xf5 ♔g6! Black's active king allowed him to hold the draw in Timman-Nunn, Brussels 1988.

35...♕b2+

Even worse is 35...b4? 36 ♕e5+ ♔h7 37 ♘f5 +− Haba-Dobrovolsky, Czech Ch, Trinec 1988.

36 ♕f2 ♕c1

Or 36...♕xf2+ 37 ♔xf2 ♗b3 38 ♘g2 ♔g7 39 ♘f4 ♔h6 40 h4 ±.

37 ♕f6+ ♔h7 38 ♕e7+ ♔g6 39 ♘xd5

± Nunn.

B2)

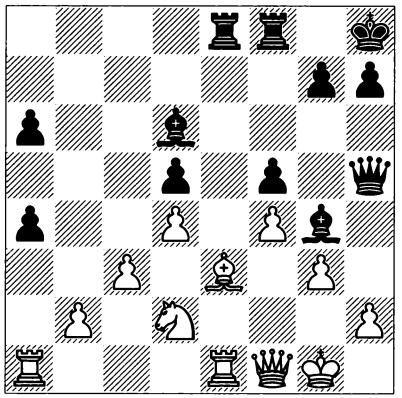
21...bxa4 *(D)*

This typical deflection is probably best.

22 ♖xa4

After 22 ♕g2 it is a good time for 22...♖e4! (22...g5 23 ♕xd5 gxf4? fails to 24 ♕xd6 fxe3 25 ♖xe3 because the f8-rook is loose) 23 ♘xe4 (23 ♖xa4 g5 24 ♘xe4 fxe4 25 ♖xa6 gxf4 26 ♖xd6 fxe3 27 ♖xe3? {27 ♖f1 may survive} 27...♗h3 28 g4 ♕xg4! 0-1 Timman-Nunn, Wijk aan Zee Radio 1983) 23...fxe4 24 ♕f1 (after 24 ♖xa4

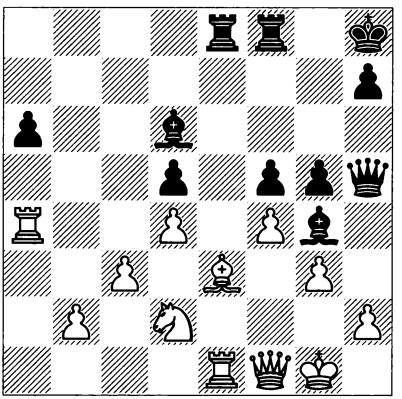
W



both 24...g5 and 24...♗f3 are unclear) 24...♗f3 25 ♕xa6 ♕h3 26 ♖e2 (26 ♕f1 ♕g4 intending ...h5-h4 – Nunn) 26...♗xe2 27 ♕xe2 g5 28 ♖xa4 gxf4 29 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 30 gxf4 e3! gave Black sufficient play in Hindle-P.Littlewood, England 1987.

22...g5 *(D)*

W



23 ♖aa1!

This is really the only move, as White needs to defend his back rank. Other moves are bad:

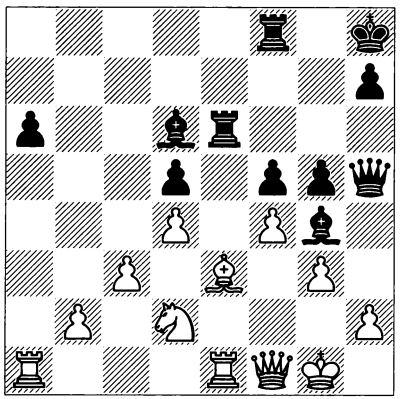
a) 23 ♖xa6? gxf4 24 ♗xf4 (Black loses after 24 gxf4 ♖g8 25 ♔h1 ♗h3 –+, 24 ♖xd6 fxe3 25 ♘b3 f4 –+ or 24 ♗f2 ♗h3! 25 ♕d3 ♖xe1+ 26 ♗xe1 ♕d1 –+) 24...♖xe1 25 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 26 gxf4 ♗e2 ∓.

b) 23 fxg5?! ♖xe3 24 ♖xe3 f4 25 gxf4 (25 ♖f3 ♗xf3 26 ♕xf3 ♕e8!) 25...♗xf4 26 ♖g3 (White may be able to hold with 26 ♕f2 but he has nothing to be happy about after 26...♕xg5 27 ♖g3 ♖f6) 26...♕e8 27 ♖xg4 ♗e3+! 28 ♔g2 ♖xf1 29 ♘xf1 ♗c1! ∓ Ulmanis-Van der Heijden, corr. 1986.

23...♖e6 *(D)*

After 23...h6 24 ♕f2 (24 ♕xa6 is also possible) 24...♖e6 25 c4 ♖c8 (Haba-Vajda, 2nd Bundesliga 2005/6), Haba gives 26 cxd5 ♖g6 27 ♖ac1 +– with the idea ♘c4-e5.

W



24 fxg5

Nunn pointed out back in 1989 that this move may be critical. Now it is the main line, but other moves are also possible:

a) 24 ♖xa6? is a mistake. After 24...gxf4 25 ♖xd6 (25 ♗xf4 ♖xe1 26 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 27 gxf4 ♗e2 0-1 Janošević-Blatny, Bad Wörishofen 1989) 25...♖xe3! –+ (25...fxe3 26 ♖xe6 exd2 27 ♖1e2 f4 is good for Black according to Nunn but after 28 ♖6e5 White may defend) White has no good moves; for example, 26 gxf4 ♗e2, 26 ♖e6 fxg3 27 ♕g2 ♖xe6 28 ♖xe6 ♗h3 or 26 ♖xe3 fxe3 27 ♘b3 ♗h3 28 ♕e1 ♕f3.

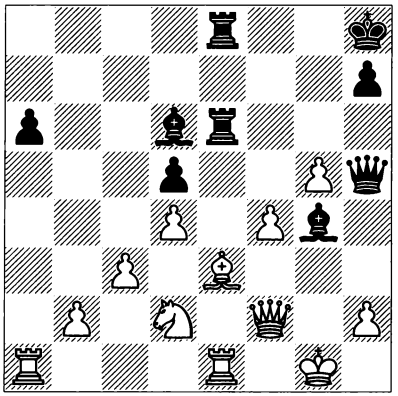
b) 24 ♕f2!? is also critical. 24...♖fe8 (24...h6 is Haba-Vajda in the note to Black's 23rd move above) 25 fxg5 h6 26 gxh6 ♗h3 (after 26...f4 27 ♗xf4 ♖e2 White has 28 ♗e5+! ♗xe5 29 ♖xe2 ♗xe2 30 dxe5 +–) 27 ♘f3 f4 28 ♗xf4 ♕xf3 29 ♗e5+ (White can also try 29 ♕xf3 ♖xe1+ 30 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 31 ♔f2 ♖f1+ 32 ♔e3 ♖xf3+ 33 ♔xf3 but the text-move looks stronger) 29...♖xe5 30 ♕xf3 ♖xe1+ 31 ♔f2 ♖1e6 32 ♕h5 ♖f8+ 33 ♔g1 ♗f5 34 ♖f1 ± Shen Yang-Hebden, Gibraltar 2008.

24...♖fe8

24...f4?! 25 ♗xf4 ♗e2 26 ♕f2 ♗xf4 27 gxf4 ♕g4+ 28 ♕g3 ♖xf4 29 ♕xg4 ♖xg4+ 30 ♔h1 or 24...♖xe3 25 ♖xe3 f4 26 ♖f3 ♗xf3 27 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 28 ♘xf3 fxg3 29 ♔g2 is an even worse version of the ending we have seen already.

25 ♕f2 f4 26 gxf4 *(D)*

B



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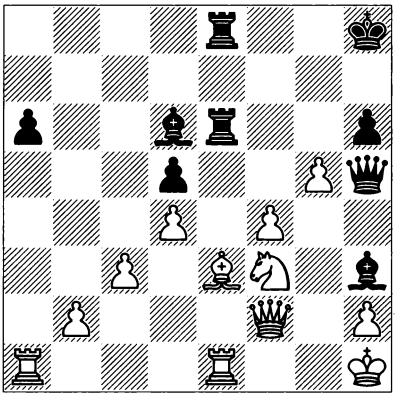


26...♗h3

Black has also tried 26...h6. Then:

a) 27 h4 hxg5 28 hxg5 ♔g7 (28...♖h6? is creative but unsound: 29 ♕g2! ♖h7 30 ♔f2! ♗xf4 31 ♗xf4 ♖f8 32 ♖e5 ♗h3 33 ♕g3 ♖xf4+ 34 ♔e1 ♖g4 35 ♕e3 1-0 Yanes-Cortinas, corr. 1992) 29 ♘f1 ♗f3 30 ♘h2 ♖h8 31 ♕g3 ♗e2 32 ♗d2 ♖e4 is unclear. White is three pawns up but it is not easy to consolidate.

b) 27 ♘f1 hxg5 28 ♘g3 ♕h3 29 fxg5 ♖f8 (29...♗xg3 30 hxg3 ♗f5 has been suggested but it looks insufficient) 30 ♕g2 ♕h4 31 ♗f2 ♖xe1+ 32 ♖xe1 ♗f3 33 ♕f1 ♗e4 34 ♖xe4 (worse is 34 ♕e2 ♖f3 35 ♖d1 ♕g4 with the initiative, but 34 ♖e3 is possible since after 34...♗f4 35 ♕xa6 ♗xe3 36 ♗xe3 ♕g4 Vladimirov's '∓' is over-optimistic because 37 ♕h6+ ♔g8 38 ♕h5 ♕e6 39 ♗d2 ♗f3 40 ♕h6 ♕xh6 41 gxh6 leaves White no worse) 34...dxe4 35 ♕g2 ♖f3 (also plausible is 35...♕xg5 36 ♕h3+ ♔g8 37 ♕e6+ ♖f7 38 ♕xd6 ♕d2) 36 g6 (36 ♘f1!?) was Dolmatov-Vladimirov, European Clubs Cup, Moscow 1989. Now Black should play 36...♗xg3! 37 ♗xg3 ♕h6 38 ♗e5+ ♔g8 39 ♕c2 ♕xg6+ 40 ♗g3 ♕g4 ∓.

27 ♔h1

Instead 27 ♖xa6 leads nowhere for White after 27...♖xe3 28 ♖xe3 ♕g4+ 29 ♕g3 ♕d1+ 30 ♕e1 ♕g4+ 31 ♕g3 ♕d1+ 32 ♕e1 ½-½ Liang Jinrong-Blatny, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

27...h6 28 ♘f3 *(D)*

After 28 gxh6 ♗c7! Black seems to have enough play. 29 ♘f3 ♗g4 30 ♘g5 ♖g8 31 ♔g1 ♗f3 32 ♗d2 (not 32 b4? ♖xg5+ 33 fxg5 ♖e4 34 ♖e2 ♕h3 0-1 Schulz-Monner Sans, corr. 1994) 32...♖xg5+ 33 fxg5 ♕g4+ 34 ♔f1 ♕h3+ ½-½ Lovaković-Arias Duval, corr. 2000.

28...♗f5

Black should avoid 28...♗xf4? 29 ♘e5 ♗xe5 30 dxe5 hxg5 31 ♖g1! g4 32 ♗d4 ♕g6 33 ♖ae1 ♔h7 34 ♖e3 ♕h5 35 b4 ± Kostal-Vaindl, corr. 2001.

29 ♘e5 hxg5 30 fxg5 ♗e4+ 31 ♔g1 ♖f8 32 ♗f4 ♔g8 33 ♖xe4

Otherwise 33...♗xe5 34 dxe5 ♕g4+.

33...dxe4 34 ♕g3 ♗xe5 35 dxe5 ♖ee8 36 ♖e1 ♖d8 37 ♖xe4 ♖d1+ 38 ♔g2 ♖b1 39 e6 ♖xb2+ 40 ♔g1 ♖b1+

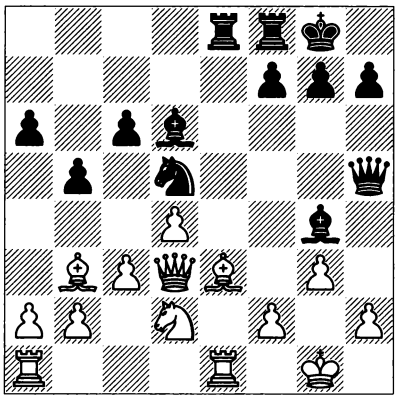
½-½ Brookes-Olofson, corr. 1998.

Section 3.3: The Adams Variation 16...♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♕h5

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♕h5 *(D)*

This kind of 'Accelerated Spassky' variation was invented by Adams by accident(!) against Ivanchuk when he simply 'left out' 17...♖e6 18 ♕f1. Nevertheless, 17...♕h5 has proved to be a viable move-order, especially if Black is willing to transpose back into the main lines of Chapter 1. This line also has the virtue of avoiding Kramnik's line, which is covered in Section 3.4. By leaving out ...♖e6, Black ensures that ♕f1 from White will not gain a tempo by chasing Black's queen away, and Black also avoids pinning himself on the a2-g8 diagonal. Black sometimes will still play ...♖e6, but there is also

W



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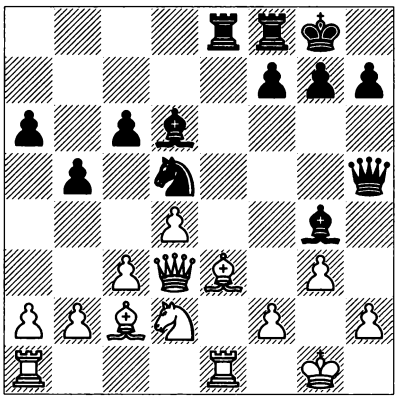


the option to double rooks on the e-file starting with ...♖e7.

White has these main tries:

A: 18 ♗c2	61
B: 18 ♕f1	63
C: 18 a4	64

18 ♗d1 ♗xd1 19 ♖axd1 f5! gives Black excellent play, and 20 f4? loses immediately to 20...♘xe3 because the d1-rook is hanging.

White's only other real possibility is 18 ♘f1 ♖e6, when 19 ♗d1?! (19 a4 ♗f5 is like 17...♖e6 18 a4 ♕h5 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♘f1 of Chapter 2, but White has delayed axb5 here, which is likely to transpose but may favour Black if White does not get an opportune time to play axb5) 19...f5 20 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 21 ♗d2 ♖g6 22 ♔g2?! (both 22 c4?! bxc4 23 ♕xc4 ♔h8 ∓ and 22 f3 ♕h3 23 ♕e2 f4 24 ♕g2 ♕d7 25 g4 h5 26 h3 hxg4 27 hxg4 c5, with compensation, are given by Adams) 22...f4 23 f3 ♕h5 24 g4 ♕h4! (not 24...♖xg4+? 25 fxg4 ♕xg4+ 26 ♔h1 f3 27 ♘g3 ♗xg3 28 ♖g1 +–) 25 ♖e2 ♖xg4+ 26 fxg4 f3+ 27 ♔h1 fxe2 28 ♕xe2 ♔h8 gave Black a strong initiative in Ivanchuk-Adams, Terrassa 1991.

A)

18 ♗c2 *(D)*

White switches to the b1-h7 diagonal, creating pressure against h7.

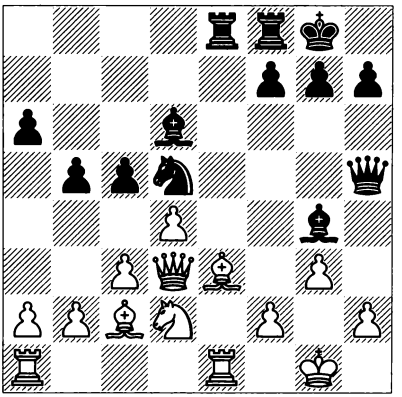
18...f5

This is logical because White has removed his bishop from the a2-g8 diagonal. Ponomariov analysed some other ideas in *NIC Magazine*:

a) 18...g6 19 f3 (19 ♘e4 ♖xe4 20 ♕xe4 ♗f5 21 ♗d1 ♕xd1 22 ♖axd1 ♗xe4 23 ♗h6 f5 24 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 is unclear) 19...♗f5 20 ♘e4 ♕xf3 21 ♗h6 ♗xe4 22 ♖xe4 ♕xd3 23 ♗xd3 ♖xe4 24 ♗xe4 ♖e8 25 ♗f3 is a little better for White because of the bishop-pair.

b) 18...c5?! *(D)* and here:

W

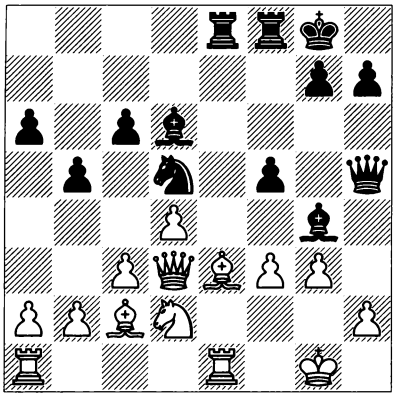


b1) 19 dxc5 ♘xe3 20 fxe3 ♗xc5 21 ♘b3 ♗b6 22 ♘d4 ♖e5 23 ♗d1 ♖fe8 24 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 25 ♖e2 h5 26 ♖f1 ♖e4 gives Black compensation for the pawn.

b2) 19 ♗d1!? ♘f6 (better than 19...♗xd1 20 ♖axd1 ♖e6 21 ♘f1 c4 22 ♕e2 ♕f5 23 ♔g2 ♖f6 24 ♗c1 h5 25 h4 when despite Black's optical compensation, White should slowly realize his extra pawn) 20 dxc5 ♗xc5 21 ♘f1 ♖d8 22 ♕c2 and it is hard for Black to prove full compensation. After 22...♖xd1 23 ♖axd1 ♗f3 (Ponomariov) 24 h4, White parries the main threat and avoids structural damage, so Black should try the more patient 22...♖fe8.

19 f3 *(D)*

B



White is willing to return the pawn to get the bishop-pair and secure some initiative. However, Black does not have to accept the offer.

19...♗h3!?

Black prefers to play for an attack. Taking the pawn is also reasonable, although Black is going to need to be ready to defend an ending where White has the bishop-pair 'for free'. 19...♗xf3 20 ♘xf3 ♕xf3 21 ♗d2 ♕xd3 22 ♗xd3 f4 (22...♖xe1+ 23 ♖xe1 g6 24 a3 ♔f7 25 c4 ♘f6 26 ♔g2 ± Ponomariov) 23 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 24 ♔f2! (24 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 25 ♗xe1 fxg3 26 hxg3 g6 27 c4 ♗b4 28 ♗f2 bxc4 29 ♗xc4 a5 gives Black excellent drawing chances) 24...fxg3+ 25 hxg3 c5 26 c4 ♘b6 27 cxb5 c4 28 ♗f1 axb5 (?! – Ponomariov, who suggests 28...♖f8+ 29 ♔g2 axb5 30 ♗e2 ♗e7 31 ♗g4 ♗f6 32 ♗e6+ ♔h8 33 ♖f1 ±) 29 ♗g2 ♖f8+ 30 ♗f3 and although Ponomariov implies that White is close to winning here, this does not look so clear after 30...b4!?. Instead 30...♗e7 31 ♗a5 ♘a4 32 b3 ♗f6 33 ♔g2 ♗xd4? 34 ♖f1 +– was Ponomariov-Leko, Tal Memorial, Moscow 2008. The threat of 35 ♗d5+ wins material.

20 ♗f2 *(D)*

20...♘f4!?

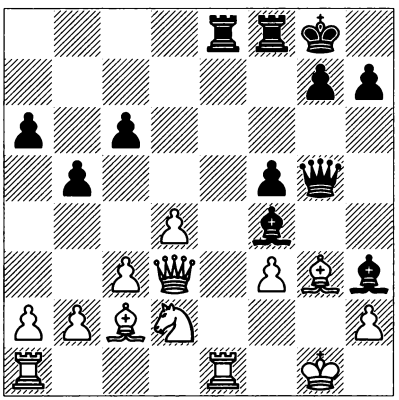
This sharp piece sacrifice was played a couple of times by Sargisian, who is a frequent assistant to Marshall expert Aronian.

a) In Sutovsky-A.Heimann, European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008, 20...♕g5 was met ruthlessly by 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 22 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 23 ♗xe1 h5 24 ♕e2! h4 25 ♕e6+ ♔h7 26 ♘f1 ♗xf1?! 27 ♗xf5+ g6 28 ♕f7+ ♔h6 29 ♗d2! ♗f4 30 ♕f8+ ♔h7 31 ♗e6! 1-0.

b) 20...♕g6 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 22 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 23 ♗xe1 h5 24 ♗b3 (24 ♘b3 h4! 25 g4 ♗xg4! 26 fxg4 ♕xg4+ 27 ♔h1 h3 28 ♗g3 f4 – Ponomariov) 24...♔h7 25 ♗f2 (25 ♘f1 ♘f4 26 ♕d2) 25...♘f4 26 ♕e3 h4 27 ♘f1 ♘d5 28 ♕d3 (28 ♕e1 f4 29 ♕e4 ♗f5 30 ♗c2? ♘e7 31 g4 ♔h8! –+) 28...♘f4 29 ♕e3 ♘d5 30 ♕d3 ♘f4 31 ♕e3 ½-½ Ponomariov-Gustafsson, Spanish Team Ch, Cala Mayor 2008. In his annotations, Ponomariov indicated that he had trouble finding improvements for White in this game.

21 gxf4 ♗xf4 22 ♗g3 ♕g5 *(D)*

W



On the surface, it looks like Black should not have enough here, but White has not managed to prove anything in practice.

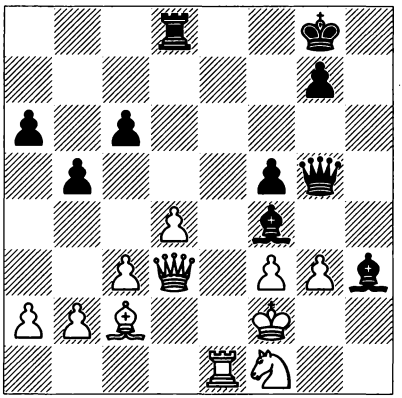
23 ♘f1

Later Ni Hua tried to improve with 23 ♗b3+ ♔h8 24 ♘f1, but after 24...h5 25 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 26 ♗f7 ♖e7 27 ♗xh5 ♗xf1 28 ♕xf1 ♗e3+ 29 ♔h1 ♕xh5 30 ♕g2 (Black also easily held after 30 ♗e5 ♖e6 31 ♖e1 f4 32 ♖e2 ♖g6 33 ♖g2 ♕h3 34 ♕e2 ♕f5 ½-½ in Landa-Amonatov, Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2009) 30...f4 31 ♗f2 ♕d5 32 ♗h4 ♖e8 Black had sufficient compensation for

the pawn in Ni Hua-Sargisian, Dresden Olympiad 2008.

23...h5! 24 ♔f2 h4 25 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 26 ♖e1 hxg3+ 27 hxg3 ♖d8 *(D)*

W



28 ♔e2

White cannot play 28 gxf4? ♕g2+ 29 ♔e3 ♖e8+, but he could consider 28 ♕e2!? with the idea 28...♗xf1 29 ♕e6+ ♔h8 30 gxf4 ♕g2+ 31 ♔e3. Instead White heads for a draw.

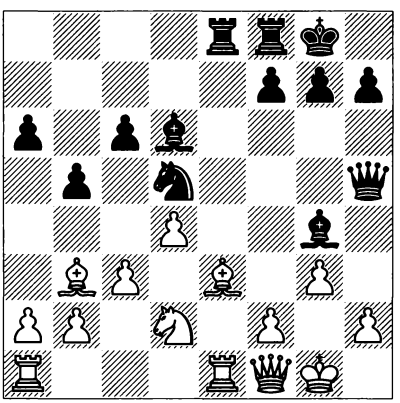
28...♗xf1+ 29 ♖xf1 ♖e8+ 30 ♔d1 ♕xg3 31 ♕xf5 ♖e1+ 32 ♖xe1 ♕xf3+ 33 ♖e2 ♕f1+ 34 ♖e1 ♕f3+

½-½ Efimenko-Sargisian, Dresden Olympiad 2008.

B)

18 ♕f1 *(D)*

B



This has been tried in a couple of high-level encounters recently.

18...♖e7!?

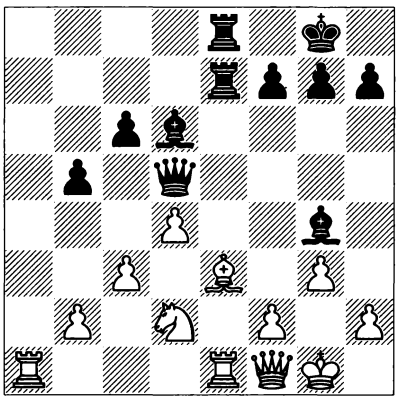
This idea is always a possibility in the Adams Variation. Black doubles rooks on the e-file without pinning himself on the a2-g8 diagonal. Another idea is 18...♗h3 19 ♗d1 ♕f5 20 ♕e2 ♖e7 21 ♕f3?! (21 ♕h5!? looks like a better try) 21...♕d3 22 ♗e2?! ♕c2, which was very awkward for White in Staak-Jacot, corr. 2007.

19 a4 ♖fe8 20 axb5 axb5

The pressure on e3 forces White to trade off his light-squared bishop.

21 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 *(D)*

W



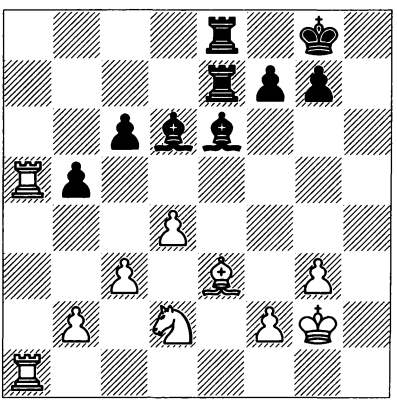
This is a typical positional situation where Black's activity and bishop-pair allow him to hold the balance.

22 ♕g2

White got nowhere after 22 f3 ♗d7 23 ♘e4 ♗f5 24 c4 bxc4 25 ♘c3 ♕e6 26 ♗f2 ♕d7 27 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 28 ♕xc4 ♗e6 29 ♕a4 ♖b8 30 d5 ½-½ in Chuprov-Sargisian, Moscow 2009.

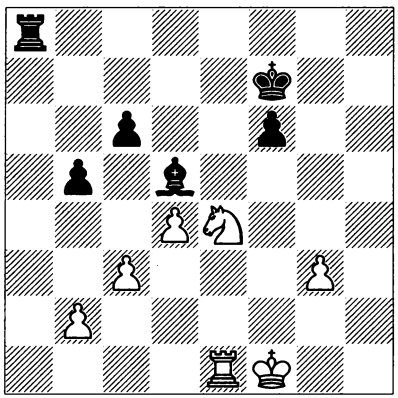
22...♕xg2+ 23 ♔xg2 h5 24 ♖a5 h4 25 ♖ea1 hxg3 26 hxg3 ♗e6 *(D)*

W



27 ♖a8 ♗d5+ 28 ♔f1 ♗xg3 29 ♗g5 f6 30 ♗xf6 ♖e1+ 31 ♖xe1 ♖xa8 32 fxg3 gxf6 33 ♘e4 ♔f7 *(D)*

W



At first glance it looks like White is a healthy pawn up, but both of Black's pieces are very active. White has to watch out for ...♖a2 because it is not easy to defend the b2-pawn – ♖e2 will run into ...♗c4.

34 ♘d6+ ♔g6 35 ♖e8

35 ♔f2 ♖d8! dislodges the knight, and 36 ♘e4 ♖h8 shows White's difficulties in coordinating his forces.

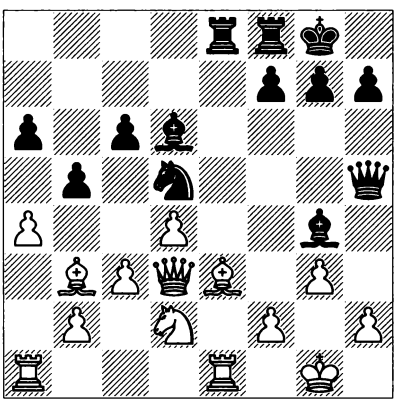
35...♖a1+ 36 ♖e1 ♖a8 37 ♖e8 ♖a1+ 38 ♖e1

½-½ Bacrot-Aronian, FIDE Grand Prix, Nalchik 2009.

C)

18 a4 *(D)*

B



White continues along normal lines and offers to transpose back into Chapter 1.

18...♗f5

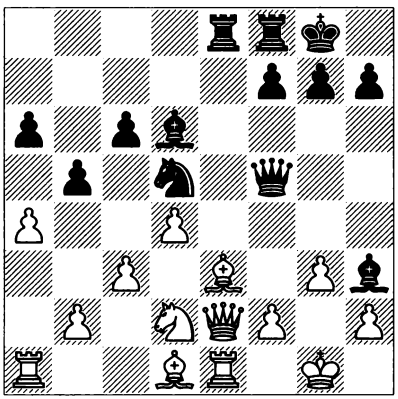
Black tries to repeat by chasing the white queen around. 18...♖e6 transposes to Chapter 1, and this may be a better idea.

19 ♕f1

The only alternative to this (besides repeating moves) is 19 ♗d1, but after 19...♕xd1 20 ♕xf5 ♘xe3 21 ♕d3 ♕c2 22 ♖xe3 ♕xb2 23 ♖b1 ♕a2 24 axb5 axb5 25 ♘e4 ♗e7 26 ♖be1 ♖d8 the ending was just equal in R.Leyva-Pupo, Match (game 2), Holguin 1992.

19...♗h3 20 ♗d1 ♕f5 21 ♕e2 *(D)*

B



21...c5

With White's pieces a little bottled up, Black tries to open the position. We have seen this idea before – Black wants either to take on d4, giving White an isolated d-pawn, or to open things up before White can coordinate his forces. Tactical excursions do not work: 21...♘f4 22 ♕f3 ♘d3 23 ♕xf5 ♗xf5 24 ♗c2! ♘xe1? 25 ♗xf5 +– and 21...♗f4 22 ♕f3 ♗xe3 23 ♕xf5 ♗xf5 24 fxe3 ♖xe3 25 ♖xe3 ♘xe3 26 ♗f3 ♖c8 27 axb5 axb5 28 ♖a6 ♗d7 29 ♘e4 ± Milos-Martins, Campinas 1994 should both be avoided.

22 ♘f3! *(D)*

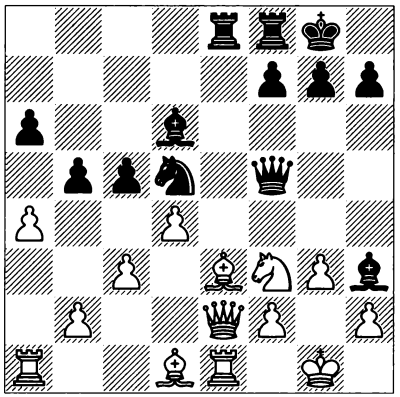
White would like to meet 22...cxd4 with 23 ♘xd4 ±. Instead 22 axb5 can be answered by 22...cxd4!, and here:

a) 23 cxd4 axb5 24 ♘f1 ♘b4! gave Black the initiative in Volokitin-Lastin, Budva 2004.

b) 23 ♘c4 ♘f4! 24 ♕f3 dxe3 25 ♘xd6 exf2+ 26 ♕xf2 ♖xe1+ 27 ♕xe1 ♕c5+ 28 ♕f2 ♕xd6 29 ♕xf4 ♕c5+ 30 ♕f2 ♕xb5 leads to equality.

22...♘xe3!?

B



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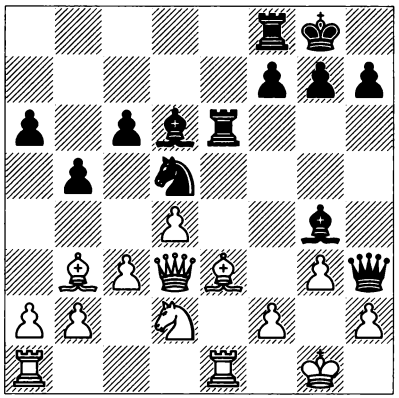


This looks best. Alternatives:

a) 22...♗g4? loses to 23 ♘h4 +–.

b) 22...b4?! 23 ♕xa6 bxc3 24 bxc3 ♘xc3 25 ♕xd6 ♘xd1 26 ♘h4 ♖xe3 27 ♖axd1 ♖xe1+ 28 ♖xe1 ♕c2 29 dxc5 ♕xa4 was Morović-Adams, Match (game 2), Santiago 1997. Here 30 c6! would give White a winning advantage.

c) 22...♗f4 23 ♕d2 ♘xe3 24 fxe3 ♗h6 25 axb5 axb5 and now 26 ♖a5 was given by Adams, while 26 ♕f2, as played in some correspondence games, looks even stronger.

d) 22...c4 was suggested by Adams. Black wants to play ...♘f4-d3. After 23 axb5 axb5 24 ♘h4 (the immediate 24 ♕d2 was suggested by Bennedik) 24...♕d7 25 ♕d2 White intends ♗f3 and ♘g2, when it is not clear that Black has enough compensation.

After 22...♘xe3 23 fxe3 cxd4 Black will meet 24 cxd4 with 24...♗b4 and 24 ♘xd4 with 24...♕g5. In both cases Black's bishop-pair and piece activity should give him enough compensation for the pawn.

Section 3.4: White Avoids 18 a4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6 *(D)*

While 18 a4 is the main line, White has several other moves which Black must be ready for. The first three of these are not very dangerous, while Line D is important for transpositional reasons as well as for a general understanding of the Marshall Attack. Line E has been fashionable lately because of a discovery by Kramnik, but I think Black can solve his problems with careful play.

A: 18 ♗d1?! 65
B: 18 ♗g5?! 66
C: 18 c4?! 66
D: 18 ♗xd5 67
E: 18 ♕f1 69

A)

18 ♗d1?!

This exchanges a piece, but Black will no longer suffer from the pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal.

18...♗xd1!

This is much better than 18...♗f5?! 19 ♕f1 ♖fe8 20 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 21 ♗b3!, Ljubojević-Nikolić, Amsterdam 1988. By pinning Black's knight, White will have time to play ♘f1 and ♗d2. The text-move gains time.

19 ♖axd1 f5

This is the thematic reaction to the exchange of light-squared bishops. Black clearly intends a quick ...f4.

20 ♘f3

After 20 f4? ♖fe8 21 ♘f1 (21 ♗f2 ♘xf4 is winning for Black), 21...♗xf4! wins back the pawn and gives Black the initiative. 22 ♗f2 ♗d6 23 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 24 ♖e1 f4 25 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 ∓ Hellwing-Nunn, Lloyds Bank Masters, London 1990.

20...♖g6!

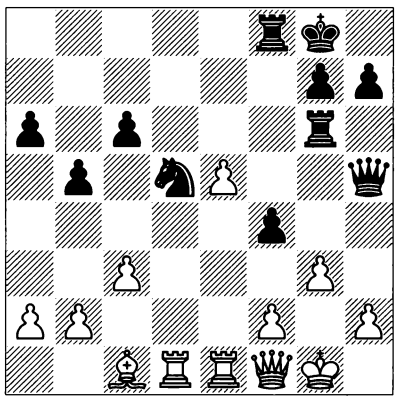
Not 20...f4? just yet, because White has the strong response 21 ♘g5.

21 ♕f1

After 21 ♘g5 ♕h5 the knight is in trouble, while 21 ♗g5?! f4 22 ♗h4? is refuted by 22...fxg3 23 fxg3 ♗xg3 24 ♗xg3 ♖xg3+ 25 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 26 ♔h1 ♖xf3 −+.

21...♕h5 22 ♘e5 ♗xe5 23 dxe5 f4 24 ♗c1 *(D)*

24 ♗c5? fxg3 25 hxg3 ♘f4! gives Black a winning attack.



24...♖h6

24...fxg3 25 hxg3 ♖xg3+ 26 fxg3 ♖xf1+ 27 ♖xf1 (27 ♔xf1 ♕f3+) 27...♕xe5 ∓ is also good. The queen and knight are definitely stronger than White's rooks and bishop.

25 ♕g2 f3 26 ♕h1

26 g4 ♖g6!.

26...♖e6 27 h4 ♖xe5 28 ♕h3

Ljubojević-Nunn, Amsterdam 1988. Now 28...♖fe8 is best, when White's bishop remains passive and Black's control of the e-file gives him a clear initiative.

B)

18 ♗g5?! *(D)*

This move is very rare.

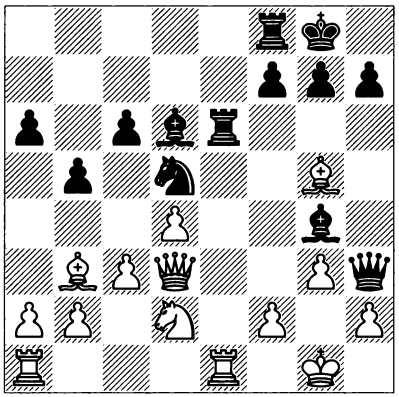
18...♖fe8 19 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 20 ♘e4

After 20 a4 ♗e2 21 ♕c2 h6 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♗e3 Black has 23...♖e4!! intending ...♖g4 −+ as pointed out by Erenburg.

20...♗f5 21 f3 ♗xg3!

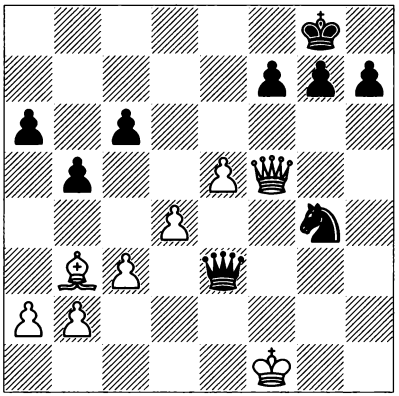
This shot gives Black at least a draw. The following moves are forced.

22 hxg3 ♗xe4 23 fxe4 ♖g6 24 ♕f3 ♖xg5 25 ♔f2 ♘f6 26 ♖g1 ♕h2+ 27 ♖g2 ♕h1 28 e5 ♘g4+ 29 ♔e2 ♖f5! 30 ♕xf5



If 30 ♕xc6? then 30...g6! secures Black's back rank and gives him a winning attack.

30...♕xg2+ 31 ♔e1 ♕g1+ 32 ♔e2 ♕g2+ 33 ♔e1 ♕xg3+ 34 ♔e2 ♕e3+ 35 ♔f1 *(D)*



35...♕c1+

Black takes the perpetual check. 35...♘h2+!? 36 ♔g2 ♕e2+ 37 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 38 ♔xf2 ♘g4+ 39 ♔f3 h5 gives Black winning chances according to Erenburg.

36 ♔e2 ♕e3+ 37 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 38 ♔e2

½-½ Alekseev-Aronian, European Ch, Warsaw 2005.

C)

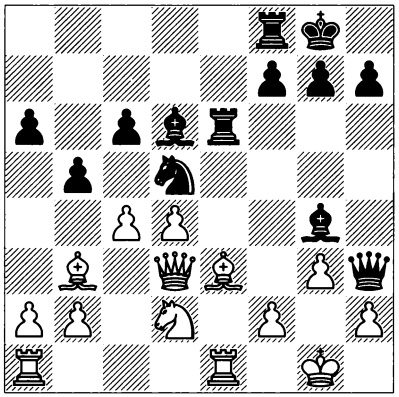
18 c4?! *(D)*

This move would be good if it were not for Black's thematic reply.

18...♗f4!

This threatens 19...♖h6!. The only question now is if White can equalize (he probably cannot).

B



19 ♕f1

19 cxd5? is sharp, but ultimately just bad. After 19...♖h6 20 ♕e4 ♕xh2+ 21 ♔f1 Black has a pleasant choice:

a) 21...f5 22 dxc6+ ♔h8 23 ♕d5 and now the spectacular 23...♖e6!! overloads the white queen, winning on the spot, since 24 gxf4 ♖e4! is a textbook example of line-blocking.

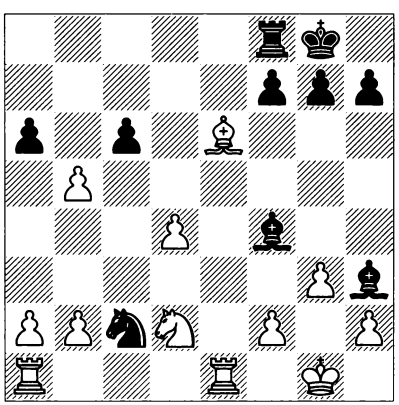
b) 21...♗xe3 22 ♖xe3 ♖f6 23 f3 ♗f5 24 ♕e5 was Timman-I.Johannsson, Reykjavik 1976. Now Black should play 24...♗h3+! (less good is 24...♕xd2?! 25 ♔g1 cxd5 26 ♗xd5 ♕xb2 27 ♖ae1, when White still has some chances because the f6-rook is rather clumsy) 25 ♔e1 ♕h1+ 26 ♔f2 ♕g2+ 27 ♔e1 ♕g1+ 28 ♔e2 ♕xa1 ∓.

19...♘xe3 20 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 21 cxb5 ♘c2

Black could also play 21...♘d5 22 ♖xe6 fxe6 23 gxf4, when 23...axb5 gave him a slight advantage in Hornung-Rogers, Doeberl Cup, Canberra 1987, while 23...♖xf4 and 23...cxb5 are also good.

22 ♗xe6 *(D)*

B



22...fxe6!

22...♗xe6?! is only good enough for equality after 23 gxf4 ♘xa1 24 ♖xa1 cxb5 intending ...♖d8 =.

23 gxf4 ♘xa1 24 ♖xa1 ♖xf4 25 f3 cxb5

Black is much better because his bishop is strong on the open board and White has much weaker pawns.

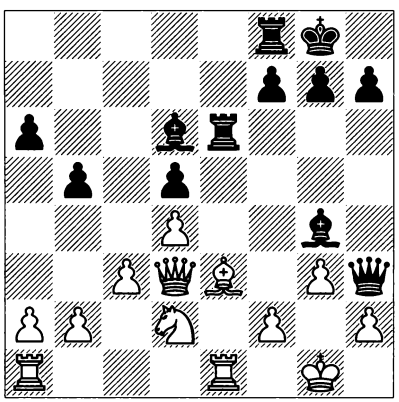
D)

18 ♗xd5

This is very committal and there is no real reason for White to make this capture so early. Black no longer has problems on the a2-g8 diagonal and now Black controls the e4-square. Even though this line should not be dangerous for Black, he should be aware of the line, because while some variations may transpose to lines considered earlier that are satisfactory for Black, there are some independent positions that he should be aware of. At the very least, the play that comes will give some insight into typical play in the Marshall Attack.

18...cxd5 *(D)*

W



19 ♕f1

19 a4 is also possible, and it will often transpose. After 19...f5 White should play 20 ♕f1 ♕h5, transposing to the main line, because neither 20 axb5 f4 nor 20 f4 ♖fe8 21 axb5 ♗xf4! is satisfactory for White. Black can also play 19...bxa4, when White probably does best to play 20 ♕f1, again transposing to the main lines. Other moves are likely to lead to trouble:

a) 20 ♖xa4?! f5 and here:

a1) 21 ♕f1? f4 22 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 23 gxf4 ♖g6+! (even stronger than Nunn's 23...♖xf4 24 ♘f1 ♖g4+ 25 ♘g3 h5) 24 ♔h1 ♗g2+ 25 ♔g1 ♗e4+ 26 ♔f1 ♗d3+ 27 ♖e2 ♗xf4 is winning for Black.

a2) 21 f4 ♗xf4! (21...♖fe8 22 ♖xa6 g5 23 ♕f1! is unclear) transposes to the note to White's 20th move in Section 2.2, which is good for Black.

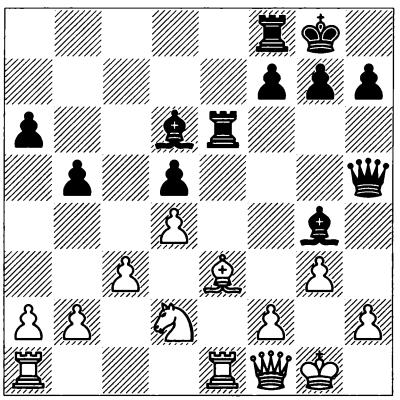
b) 20 c4 and then:

b1) 20...♗b4 21 cxd5 ♗xd2 22 ♗xd2 ♖b6 is drawish according to Nunn. After 23 ♖xa4 ♖xb2 (intending ...♖xd2 and ...♗f3) White should play 24 ♖a3 (not 24 ♗f4? ♖xf2!) although Black should be fine here.

b2) 20...f5!? looks even stronger. 21 cxd5 (21 c5 f4! ∓) 21...♖g6 22 f4 ♗f3! 23 ♖e2 (23 ♘xf3 ♖xg3+!) 23...♖xg3+ 24 hxg3 ♕h1+ 25 ♔f2 ♗xe2 26 ♖xh1 ♗xd3 gives Black a clearly better ending because of his bishop-pair.

19...♕h5 *(D)*

W



20 a4

White has a few alternatives, but none should put off Black:

a) 20 f4 ♖fe8 21 ♕f2 and now 21...♕f5 intending ...b4 was given by Nunn. This looks good, while 21...f5 is possible as well.

b) 20 ♕g2 ♖fe8 21 a4 b4 was another suggestion by Nunn. This one has since been seen in practice: 22 c4 (22 ♖ac1 ♗e2! Nunn) 22...dxc4 23 ♘xc4 ♗f3 24 ♕f1 ♗d5 with more than enough for the pawn.

c) 20 f3 ♗h3! (20...♖f6?! 21 ♕e2 ♗xf3 22 ♘xf3 ♕xf3 23 ♕xf3 ♖xf3 and now 24 ♗d2 was a little better for White in Anand-Mannion, Lloyds Bank Masters, London 1986 because the f6-rook is a bit awkward, while 24 ♔g2 ♖f6 25 ♗d2 ± looks even more accurate) 21 ♕f2 and now 21...♖fe8 gives Black good play, while 21...g5 intending ...f5 is another Nunn idea.

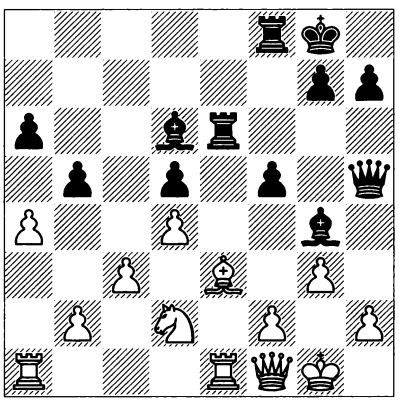
After 20 a4 Black has a choice between:

D1: 20...f5?! 68
D2: 20...bxa4 69

D1)

20...f5?! *(D)*

W



This is probably the less promising of the two options.

21 f4

21 axb5!? also looks better for White. 21...f4 22 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 23 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 24 gxf4 ♗h3 25 ♕d3 ♖xf4 (25...♗f5 26 ♕f3 ♗g4 27 ♕g3! avoids a repetition) 26 bxa6 (after 26 ♘f1 ♗xf1 27 ♖xf1 ♖f3 28 ♕d1 axb5 Black probably has enough to draw) 26...♖g4+ 27 ♕g3 ♖xg3+ 28 hxg3 ♗c8 29 a7 ♗b7 30 a8♕+ ♗xa8 31 ♖xa8+ ♔f7 32 ♘f1 ± Zednik-Peetoom, corr. 2005.

21...♖fe8

21...bxa4 22 ♕g2 is a position we covered in Line A of Section 2.1, which is also shaky for Black.

22 axb5!

Other moves are less threatening:

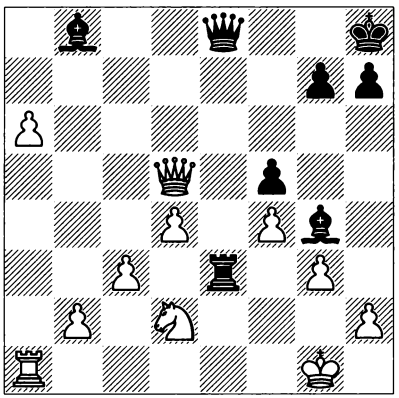
a) After 22 ♕f2, 22...g5?! 23 fxg5 f4 24 gxf4 is insufficient for Black, but 22...b4 (Nunn), 22...h6 and 22...bxa4 all look better.

b) 22 ♗f2 ♖e2 23 ♕g2 h6! 24 axb5 ♖xd2 25 bxa6 ♗b8 26 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 27 h3 ♗h5 28 a7 ♗xa7 29 ♖xa7 ♕e2 gave Black good compensation for the pawns in Kogan-Mitchell, corr. 1963.

22...♖xe3 23 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 24 bxa6 ♗b8 25 ♕b5 ♕e8 26 ♕xd5+

26 ♕xe8+ ♖xe8 27 a7? ♗xa7 28 ♖xa7? ♖e1+ 29 ♔f2 ♖e2+ is winning for Black.

26...♔h8 *(D)*



27 ♕a8 (not 27 ♘f1? ♗f3! −+) and now:

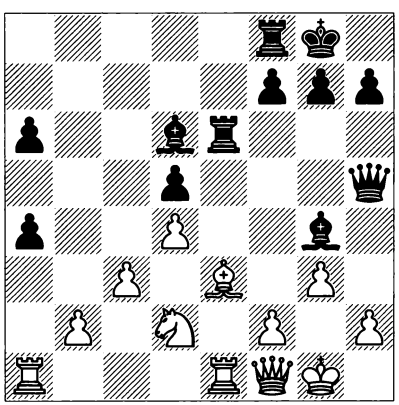
a) 27...♖e1+? 28 ♖xe1 ♕xe1+ 29 ♘f1 +−.

b) 27...h6?! 28 a7 ♗xa7 29 ♕xe8+ ♖xe8 30 h3! leaves Black in trouble after both 30...♖a8 31 ♔g2 and 30...♗xd4+ 31 cxd4 ♗xh3 32 d5 ♖e2 33 ♖d1 intending ♘c4.

c) 27...♖e2 28 ♘f1 ♔g8 (Nunn) gives Black reasonable drawing prospects. One idea is 29...♗a7 to trade queens (after 29 b4, for example), since 30 ♕xa7?? loses to 30...♗f3.

D2)

20...bxa4 *(D)*



As is often the case, this is the stronger move.

21 ♖xa4 f5 22 ♖xa6

22 f4? ♕e8 is a familiar trick which we saw in note 'c' to White's 22nd move in Line A of Section 2.1.

Also bad is 22 f3 ♗h3 23 ♕f2 ♖fe8 intending ...f4 ∓. Note that 24 f4? fails to 24...♖xe3 25 ♖xe3 ♕d1+.

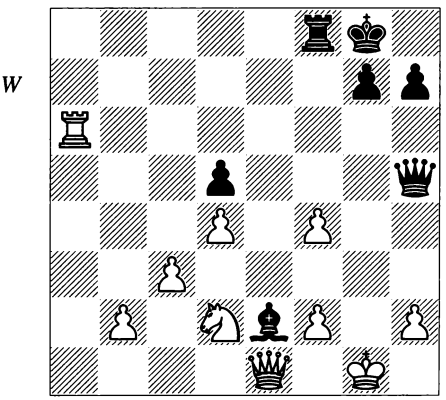
22...f4

This is safe enough, but Black has a fighting alternative in 22...♗h3. White then has:

a) 23 ♕e2 ♕xe2 24 ♖xe2 f4 25 ♖xd6 fxe3 (25...♖xd6 26 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 27 gxf4 ♖g6+ is only a draw) 26 ♖xe6 exd2 27 ♖xd2 ♗xe6 ∓. The bishop should be stronger than the pawns.

b) 23 ♖xd6!? ♖xd6 (worse is 23...♗xf1 24 ♖xe6 intending ♗f4 ±) 24 ♕b5 is difficult to assess.

23 ♗xf4 ♖xe1 24 ♕xe1 ♗xf4 25 gxf4 ♗e2! *(D)*



26 ♖a7

26 ♖b6? loses to 26...♕g4+ 27 ♔h1 ♖e8 −+.

26...♕g4+ 27 ♔h1 ♖e8 28 ♕a1

White intends 29 ♖a8, so Black has nothing better than 28...♗f3+ 29 ♘xf3 ♕xf3+ 30 ♔g1 ♕g4+ ½-½ Lovaković-Baron, corr. 2002.

E)

18 ♕f1

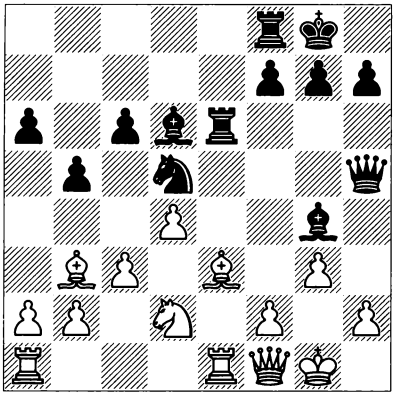
This move just looks like a transpositional device, but White has a devilish idea in mind.

18...♕h5 *(D)*

19 f3!?

This shocking innovation of Kramnik's put 18 ♕f1 on the map. Instead 19 ♗xd5 cxd5 just transposes to Line D, while 19 ♗d1? ♗xd1 20

W

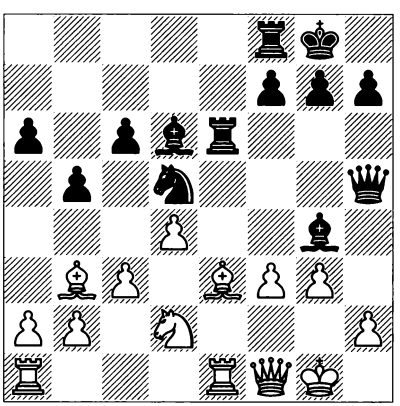


♖axd1 f5 ∓ gives Black a strong attack and is not worth considering.

The only real alternative is 19 a4 ♗h3 (19...f5 and 19...bxa4 20 ♖xa4 f5 21 f4 transpose to the main lines of Chapter 2) 20 ♗d1 ♕f5 which is like the Spassky Variation, but White has left out axb5. This is likely to transpose back to Chapter 1, but Nunn points out one line where the omission of the exchange of a-pawns is important because a back-rank trick is not available to White. The line goes: 21 ♕e2 ♗f4 (! Nunn, while Black can also consider 21...c5 22 axb5 axb5, transposing into Line D2 of Chapter 1) 22 ♕f3 ♖fe8 23 ♘f1 (the point is that the analogous 23 gxf4 ♖g6+ 24 ♔h1 ♗g4 25 ♕e4 does not work because there is no weak back rank) 23...♗xf1 24 ♖xf1 ♘xe3 25 fxe3 ♗xe3+ 26 ♔g2, when White has just a tiny edge because Black's pawns are more likely to be vulnerable.

We now return to 19 f3 *(D)*:

B



After 19 f3!? the bishop on e3 is hanging, but if Black captures it, White can quickly win back the piece. Black has a choice between moving his bishop, pinning the f-pawn, or just taking the bishop on offer. We have:

E1: 19...♗f5?! 70
E2: 19...♖f6?! 70
E3: 19...♘xe3 71

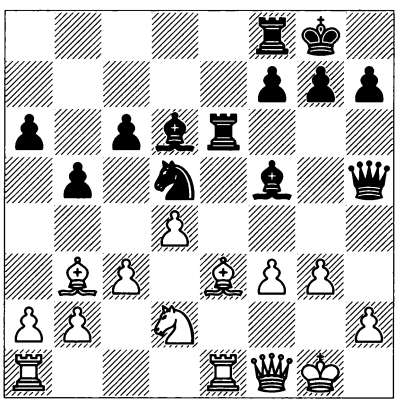
19...♗h3 has been suggested as well, but this has not seen any takers at grandmaster level. After 20 ♕f2 ♗f5 White could continue with 21 a4 or maybe even 21 c4!?.

However, 19...♖xe3 looks playable. After 20 fxg4 ♕xg4 21 ♖xe3 ♘xe3 22 ♕f2 ♘d5 exchanging queens with 23 ♕f3 ♕xf3 24 ♘xf3 does not look like anything special for White after 24...♖e8.

E1)

19...♗f5?! *(D)*

W



This is probably Black's worst choice.

20 ♘e4!

Returning the pawn to seize the initiative.

20...♗xe4 21 fxe4 ♖xe4 22 ♗d1

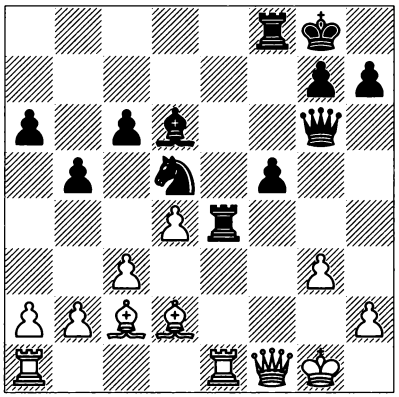
After 22 ♗f2, 22...♖fe8?! 23 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 24 ♖e1 ♕g6 25 ♖xe4 ♕xe4 26 ♕e1 ♕xe1+ 27 ♗xe1 ♘e3 28 ♗d2 ♘c4 29 ♗c1 left White a little better in Perelshteyn-Onishchuk, USA Ch, Stillwater 2007, but Black should be OK after the superior 22...♘f6.

The text-move is a zwischenzug devised by Bacrot that causes Black difficulties.

22...♕g6 23 ♗c2 f5 24 ♗d2! *(D)*

This is even stronger than grabbing the exchange with 24 ♗xe4 fxe4 25 ♕h3, because after 25...h5 Black has counterplay.

B



24...♖g4 25 ♖e2 ♖f6?!

This is bad, but Black's position was uncomfortable in any case.

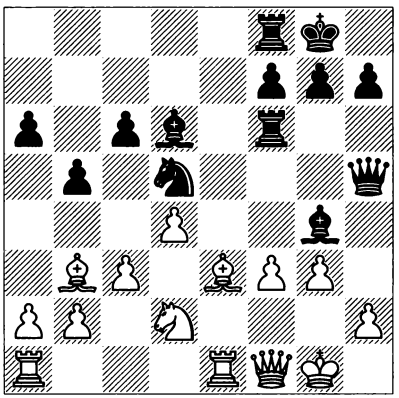
26 ♖ae1 ♕f7 27 ♖e8+ ♗f8 28 ♖d8

+– Bacrot-Yakovenko, European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008.

E2)

19...♖f6?! *(D)*

W



This pinning move looks a bit artificial.

20 ♕g2

Other moves are less troubling to Black:

a) 20 ♕e2?! ♗xf3 21 ♘xf3 ♖xf3 22 ♗xd5 (White cannot contemplate either 22 ♗d2? ♗xg3 or 22 ♗f2? ♘f4!) 22...♕xd5 23 ♗f2 ♖f6 24 b3 ♕f5 25 ♖ad1 h5 was already a little better for Black in Anand-Ivanchuk, Bilbao 2008.

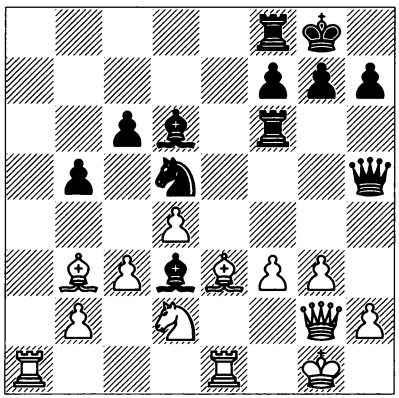
b) 20 ♗d1 ♖e8 (20...♗f5!? may be better) 21 ♗f4 ♖xe1 22 ♕xe1 ♖e6 23 ♗e5 ♗h3 24 ♕f2 (24 f4!? – Mikhalevski) 24...♗xe5 25 f4 ♗xd4 26 ♗xh5 ♗xf2+ 27 ♔xf2 ♘f6 28 ♗f3 ♔f8 = Yakovenko-Svidler, Moscow 2007.

20...♗h3

Taking the pawn gives White an easy edge after 20...♗xf3 21 ♘xf3 ♕xf3 (21...♖xf3? 22 ♗d1) 22 ♕xf3 ♖xf3 23 ♗c1!? (perhaps better than 23 ♗d2 because White may want to play ♗c2 in response to ...♘b6, and 23 ♗c1 avoids ...♘c4 coming with tempo) with the idea ♔g2.

21 ♕f2 ♗f5 22 a4 ♗d3 23 axb5 axb5 24 ♕g2! *(D)*

B



Now 25 ♘e4 is a threat.

24...♗b8 25 g4

Mikhalevski suggests that 25 ♖ad1, again intending ♘e4, is even better.

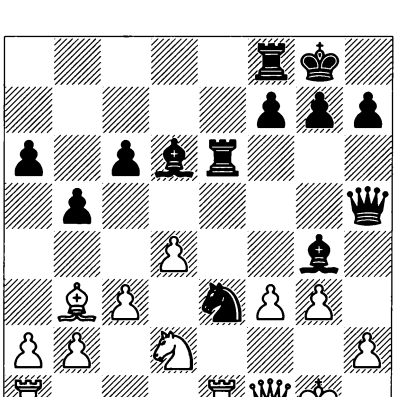
25...♕g6 26 ♗xd5 cxd5 27 ♘b3

White was clearly better in Naiditsch-Sargisian, European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008.

E3)

19...♘xe3 *(D)*

W



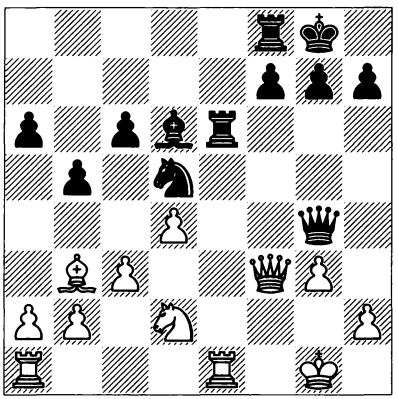
Taking the piece is the most obvious move, of course.

20 ♕f2!

This is the point of Kramnik's idea. White wins back the piece.

20...♘d5 21 fxg4 ♕xg4 22 ♕f3 *(D)*

B



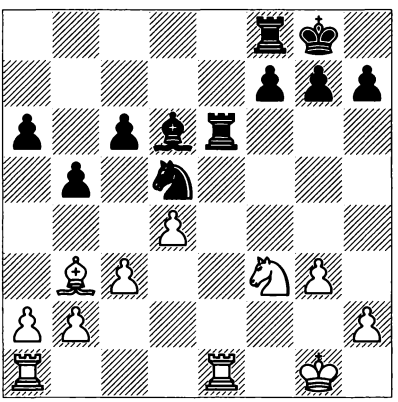
White is confident that despite returning the extra pawn, any resulting opposite-bishop ending will favour him. There is still pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal and White has the possibility of opening the queenside with a4.

22...♕g5

Black prefers to keep queens on the board. Another way to do this is with 22...♕g6 23 ♖xe6 (23 ♗xd5 cxd5 24 ♕xd5 ♗xg3 25 ♖xe6 fxe6 gives Black the initiative) 23...♕xe6 24 ♕e4 ♖e8 25 ♖e1 ♕xe4 26 ♘xe4 ♔f8 as given by Marin, although White still has some slight pressure.

Heading into the ending immediately with 22...♕xf3 23 ♘xf3 *(D)* leaves White with a nagging initiative, but it may be tolerable:

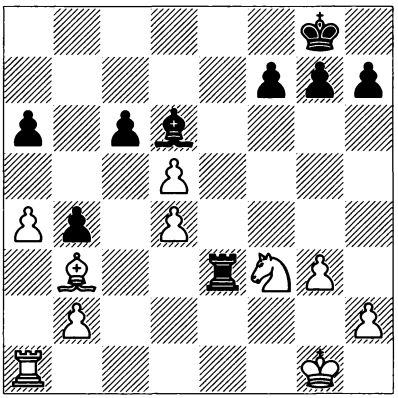
B



a) 23...h6?! 24 ♖xe6 fxe6 25 ♘d2 a5 26 a4 b4 27 c4 ♘c7 28 ♗c2 was better for White in Naiditsch-Ivanisević, Subotica 2008.

b) 23...♖fe8 24 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 25 a4 b4 26 c4 ♖e3 27 cxd5 *(D)*.

B



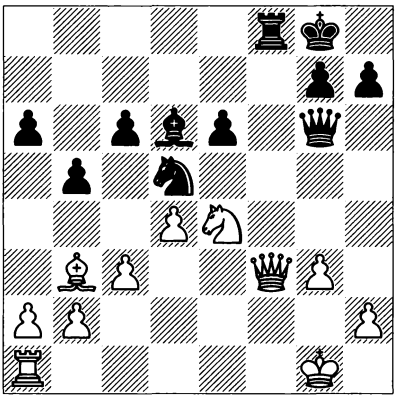
27...♖xb3! (better than 27...♖xf3 28 ♗c4 cxd5 29 ♔g2 ♖e3 30 ♗xa6 ±) 28 ♘d2 ♖xb2! (not 28...♖d3?! 29 ♘c4 ± Marin) 29 ♘c4 ♖c2 30 ♘xd6 b3 31 ♖e1 (31 ♖b1 b2 and the b-pawn will cost White his rook) 31...h5! (not 31...g6? 32 ♘f5! gxf5 33 d6 +–) 32 dxc6 b2 33 ♖e8+ ♔h7 34 ♖b8 ♖xc6 35 ♖xb2 ♖xd6 with equality!

23 ♖xe6

23 ♘e4?! ♕e7! is awkward for White.

23...fxe6 24 ♘e4 ♕g6 *(D)*

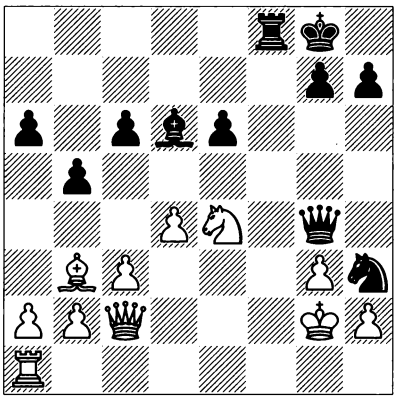
W



25 ♕d3!

This is a slight improvement on Kramnik's original 25 ♕e2 since White avoids the ...♗f4-e3 manoeuvre in line 'b' below because his knight remains protected. After 25 ♕e2 Black has:

a) 25...♘f4?! 26 ♕c2 ♘h3+ 27 ♔g2 ♕g4 *(D)*.



28 ♗xe6+! ♕xe6 29 ♕b3 ♘f4+ 30 gxf4 ♕xb3 31 axb3 ♗xf4 32 ♖xa6 ± was the stem game Kramnik-Aronian, Rapid match (game 1), Erevan 2007.

b) 25...♗f4 26 ♔h1 ♗e3 27 ♗c2 (27 ♗xd5!? exd5 28 ♘c5 ♖e8 29 ♖e1 a5 30 ♔g2 may still give White chances of a slight edge according to Mikhalevski) 27...♕f5! looks OK for Black, who may follow with ...e5 or even ...♕h3.

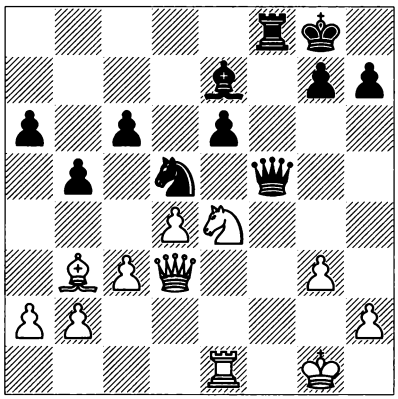
25...♗e7

Instead 25...♘f4?! 26 ♕c2 is Kramnik-Aronian above.

After 25...h5 26 ♗c2 ♗f4 27 ♖e1 h4 28 ♘f2 ♕xd3 29 ♘xd3 ♗e3+?! (29...hxg3 30 hxg3 ♗xg3 31 ♖xe6 ♖f6 32 ♖xf6 gxf6 33 ♗b3 a5 34 ♔g2 ♗d6 35 ♔f3 ♔g7 36 a4 is given by Mikhalevski – White still has a nagging edge but Black should hold) 30 ♔g2 ♗d2 31 ♖e2 ♘e3+ 32 ♔h3 hxg3 33 ♔xg3 (not 33 ♖xd2? ♖f6!, which suddenly turns the tables – Black threatens mate and 34 ♔xg3 loses to 33...♘f1+) 33...♘f1+ 34 ♔h3 White had serious pressure which he eventually converted into victory in Yakovenko-Bacrot, Dortmund 2009.

25...a5!? is another possibility.

26 ♖e1 ♕f5 *(D)*



27 ♕e2 e5 28 dxe5 ♕xe5 29 ♘d2 ♕xe2 30 ♖xe2

Now, after 30...♖e8 31 ♔f1 ♔f8 32 ♖e6 ♖d8 33 ♘f3 ♖d6 34 ♘d4 White won material in Naiditsch-Onishchuk, European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008, but 30...♗c5+ 31 ♔g2 should hold for Black. The immediate exchange of queens given in the note to Black's 22nd move looks tenable as well.

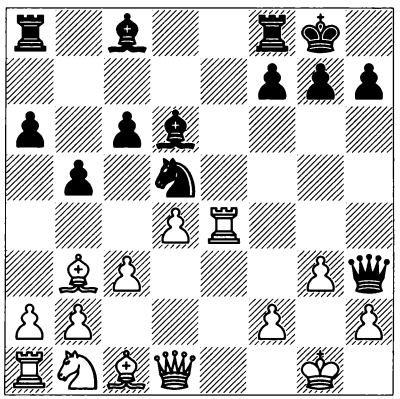
Conclusions

As in the Main Line of the previous chapter, the Pawn Push variations are on very shaky ground theoretically. They are dangerous, however, because any slip by White could prove fatal. The Adams Variation is similar to the Spassky Variation of course, and is similarly holding up quite well. Of White's 18th-move deviations, Kramnik's 18 ♕f1 combined with the shocking 18...♕h5 19 f3!? has given Black some headaches, but I think Black can equalize here too if he is careful.

4 Modern Variation: 15 ♖e4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♖e4 *(D)*

B



This unusual move has been rather controversial for a long time. White moves his rook for a fourth time and puts it on an exposed square. The purpose of the move is to prevent both ...♗g4 and ...f5 while preparing ♖h4 to evict the black queen, after which White may even go on the attack with ♕h5.

15...g5!

Practice has shown that this sharp idea is Black's best move. The pawn cannot be taken because after 16 ♗xg5? ♕f5 Black wins a piece. The manoeuvre ♖h4 is prevented, and Black is ready to attack the wandering rook with ...f5 or ...♗f5. Other moves have been found lacking for Black. 15...♗f5?? and 15...f5?? both lose the queen to 16 ♖h4. Some other tries:

a) 15...♘f6?! 16 ♖h4 ♕d7 (16...♕f5 17 ♗c2!) 17 ♗g5 ±.

b) 15...♕f5?! 16 ♘d2 ♕g6 17 ♖e1 ♗g4 18 f3 ♗e6 19 ♘e4 ± Ricard-Wallner, corr. 2005.

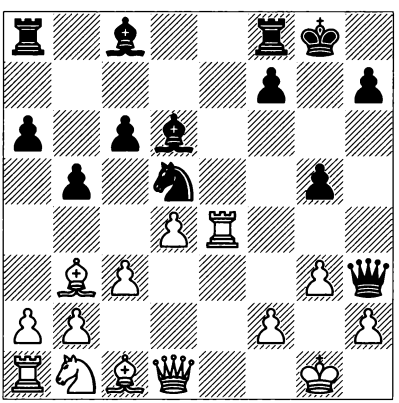
c) 15...♗d7?! 16 c4!? (16 ♖h4 ♕e6 17 ♘d2 is also possible) 16...bxc4 17 ♗xc4 ♖ae8 18 ♘d2 ♘f6 19 ♖h4 ♕f5 20 ♘f3 ♘e4 21 ♗d3 h6 22 ♗e3 ± Ničevski-Plachetka, Naleczow 1979.

d) 15...♕d7?! 16 ♘d2 ♗b7 (after 16...f5 17 ♖e1 f4 18 ♕h5! it is White who is attacking, while 16...♘f6 17 ♖h4 ♗b7 18 ♘f3 ♖ae8 19 ♗g5 ± was Tal-Krogius, USSR Ch, Leningrad 1971) 17 ♖e1 c5 18 dxc5 (18 ♘e4 c4 19 ♗c2 ♗e7 20 ♘g5 ♗xg5 21 ♗xg5 ♖ae8 gave Black some counterplay in Nunn-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 1991) 18...♗xc5 19 ♘e4 ♗e7 20 ♗g5 ♖ad8 21 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 was Lalić-Turner, Spondon 2000, and now Lalić gives 22 ♕h5 ♘f6 23 ♕c5 ±.

e) 15...♗b7?! 16 ♖h4 ♕e6 17 ♘d2 f5 (or 17...♖fe8 18 ♘e4 ♗e7 19 ♘c5! ♗xc5 20 dxc5 ♕e7 21 ♕d3 g6 22 ♕d2 h5 23 ♗xd5 cxd5 24 ♕d4 ± Nunn-Hebden, Lloyds Bank Masters, London 1990) 18 ♕h5 h6 19 ♘f3 ♗e7 20 ♖h3 c5 21 dxc5 ♗xc5 22 ♗f4 ♖ae8 23 ♖d1 ♖e7 24 ♗g5 ♖d7 25 ♖e1 ♕b6 26 ♖e2 ♔h7 27 ♖h4! a5 28 ♗xh6! ♕xh6 (28...gxh6 29 ♘g5+) 29 ♕g5 a4 30 ♖e6 1-0 Leko-Adams, Dortmund 1999.

Perhaps some line in here can be rehabilitated, but we shall stick with the main move, 15...g5 *(D)*.

W



With ♖h4 prevented, Black is ready to attack the rook with ...f5 or, more often, ...♗f5. Having spent so much time moving the rook already, often instead of retreating White will leave the rook on e4, offering an exchange sacrifice. Positionally speaking, this is justified by

the weakening of Black's kingside, especially on the light squares. It is very important that Black considers this when taking the rook – it is more important to be able to fight for the initiative, and this may or may not involve taking on e4.

We examine:

A:	**16 ♕e2**	75
B:	**16 ♕f3**	77
C:	**16 ♕e1**	80
D:	**16 ♕f1**	81

Other moves are possible but they are much less common:

a) 16 a4?! is slow. 16...f5 17 ♗xd5+ (17 ♖e3 ♔h8 18 ♗xd5 cxd5 is the same) 17...cxd5 18 ♖e3 ♔h8 19 ♕f1 (or 19 axb5 f4 20 gxf4 ♕h4 ∓) 19...♕xf1+ (19...♕h5 20 ♕e2 ♕g6 is also possible, but the text-move looks stronger) 20 ♔xf1 f4 gives Black a powerful initiative.

b) 16 ♘d2 f5 (16...♗f5 transposes to Line B after 17 ♕f3 or 17 ♗xd5 cxd5 18 ♖e3 ♖ae8 19 ♕f3). Now 17 ♗xd5+ cxd5 does not help White, while 17 ♖e5 ♗xe5 18 dxe5 f4 also fails to stem Black's initiative, so White should retreat the rook:

b1) 17 ♖e2 f4 18 ♕f1 ♕h5 gives Black good chances.

b2) 17 ♖e3 f4 (17...♔h8 is also possible) 18 gxf4 ♕h6 also gives Black a strong attack.

b3) 17 ♖e1 f4 18 ♕e2 ♗g4 19 ♕f1 and now 19...fxg3 looks good but it is not so clear: 20 hxg3 ♗xg3 21 ♕xh3 ♗xf2+ 22 ♔h2 ♗xh3 23 ♖e5 g4 24 ♖xd5 cxd5 25 ♗xd5+ ♔g7 26 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 27 ♘e4 is difficult to assess. Black could also try 19...♕h5!? with good attacking chances.

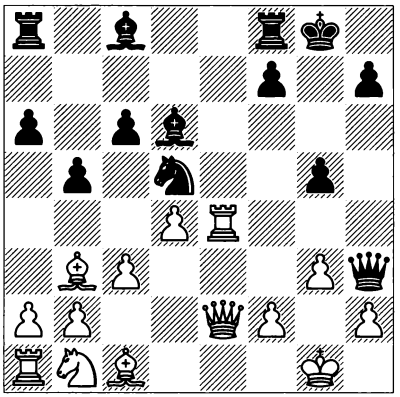
A)

16 ♕e2 *(D)*

16...f5!

This is the soundest move and should lead to a draw. Other moves invite White to make a promising exchange sacrifice:

a) 16...♘f6?! 17 ♘d2 (not 17 ♗xg5? ♗g4) 17...♗f5 18 f3 c5 (worse is 18...♘xe4?! 19 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 {19...♗e7? 20 ♘f2 wins Black's queen} 20 fxe4 ♗e7 21 ♗e3 ± Sax-Atalik, Bled 2000) 19 ♕f2 c4 (19...cxd4 20 cxd4 ♖ac8 21 ♖e1 ♗b4 22 ♘e4 ♘xe4 23 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 24 fxe4 ♕g4 25 e5 gives White good compensation



B

according to Ponomariov) 20 ♗c2 h6 21 b3 cxb3?! (21...♖fc8 is a better try) 22 axb3 ♖fc8 23 ♗b2 ♗b4?! (23...♗g6 is better but after 24 ♗d3 ♘xe4 25 ♘xe4 ♗e7 26 c4 White has excellent compensation for the exchange) 24 ♖e5 ♗xc2 25 cxb4 ♗g6 was Ponomariov-Adams, Linares 2002. Now White can play 26 d5! ♖c2 27 ♕d4 with a winning advantage.

b) 16...♗f5!? and here:

b1) 17 ♘d2 and now rather than transposing to line 'a' by 17...♘f6?!, Black could try 17...♗xe4 18 ♘xe4 ♕e6 19 ♕f3 f6.

b2) 17 ♗xd5 cxd5 18 ♖e3 ♗g4 19 ♕f1 ♕h5 20 ♘d2 ♖ae8 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 22 f3 ♗h3 23 ♕f2 f5 24 ♘f1 f4 25 ♗d2 ♕g6 ∓ Czaeczine-Jackova, Women's Bundesliga 2003/4.

b3) 17 f3 and now:

b31) 17...♘f6?! 18 ♗xg5? (White should instead prefer 18 ♘d2!, transposing to line 'a') 18...♗xe4 19 ♗xf6? (White has to try 19 fxe4 ♘xe4! 20 ♕xe4 ♖ae8 21 ♘d2 or 19 ♘d2) 19...♗xb1! 20 ♖xb1 ♕f5 −+ Novitsky-Azarov, Belarus Ch, Minsk 2004.

b32) 17...♗xe4 seems to force a draw: 18 fxe4 ♖ae8 19 ♘d2 f5 20 e5 f4 21 ♘e4 ♗xe5 22 dxe5 ♖xe5 23 ♘f6+ ♖xf6 24 ♕xe5 fxg3 25 ♗xd5+ cxd5 26 ♕xg5+ ♔f7 27 ♕xd5+ ♔e8 28 ♕a8+ ♔f7 29 ♕b7+ ♔e8 ½-½ Bologan-Onishchuk, Poikovsky 2003.

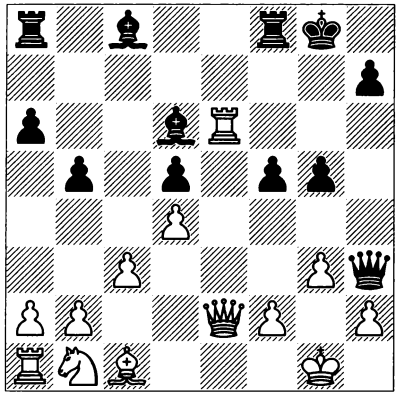
17 ♗xd5+

White must make this exchange. Instead 17 ♖e6? ♗xe6! 18 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 19 ♕xd6 ♖ae8 gives Black a winning attack: 20 ♗d2 f4 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 f3 g4 0-1 Smirin-Grishchuk, European Clubs Cup, Panormo 2001.

17...cxd5 18 ♖e6 *(D)*

18...f4!

B



This discovery of Anand's completely solves Black's problems. Other moves are risky, but may be playable:

a) 18...♗c7 19 ♖c6 (19 ♗xg5 is also unclear after 19...♗xe6 20 ♕xe6+ ♖f7 21 ♘d2 ♕h5 or 19...f4 20 ♖h6 ♕f5 21 ♗h4 ♗d7) 19...f4 20 ♖xc7 f3 21 ♕f1 ♕xf1+ 22 ♔xf1 ♗h3+ 23 ♔e1 (23 ♔g1 ♖ae8 24 ♗d2 ♖e2 intending ...♖fe8) 23...♖ae8+ 24 ♔d1 (24 ♗e3? ♖xe3+ 25 fxe3 f2+) 24...♖e2 25 ♗xg5 ♖fe8 was not so clear, despite White's big material advantage, in Mezera-Schulze, corr. 2003.

b) 18...♗xe6!? is supposed to be bad, but some correspondence games have shown that matters are not so clear. 19 ♕xe6+ ♔g7 and here:

b1) 20 ♕xd6 ♖ae8 21 ♕d7+ ♔h8 22 ♗d2 ♖e2 (with compensation – Ponomariov) 23 c4 ♖xf2 24 ♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 25 ♔e1 ♕h1+ 26 ♔e2 bxc4 should lead to a perpetual check.

b2) 20 ♗xg5 ♕h5!. Black has won two correspondence games from this position, so White will need to find improvements:

b21) 21 ♕d7+ ♖f7 22 ♗f6+ ♔g6 23 ♕xd6 ♕d1+ 24 ♔g2 ♖xf6 25 ♕xd5 ♖af8 26 ♕f3? ♕c2 and Black is much better, V.Vaiser-H.Koch, corr. 2005.

b22) 21 ♕xd6 ♕xg5 22 ♕e5+ ♔g6 23 f4 ♕d8 24 ♕e2 ♖e8 25 ♕f2 ♖a7 26 ♘d2 ♖ae7 27 ♔f1 ♕c8 28 ♘f3 ♕c4+ 29 ♔g1 ♖e2 30 ♕f1 ♕d3 31 ♘e5+ ♖8xe5 32 fxe5 ♕e3+ 33 ♔h1 ♖f2 34 ♕h3 ♖xb2 0-1 Koch-Efendiev, corr. 2002.

19 ♖xd6 ♗g4 20 ♕f1

Other moves are just bad:

a) 20 f3? ♖ae8 21 ♕f1 ♕xf1+ 22 ♔xf1 fxg3 −+.

b) 20 ♕e5? ♖ae8 21 ♕xg5+ ♔h8 −+.

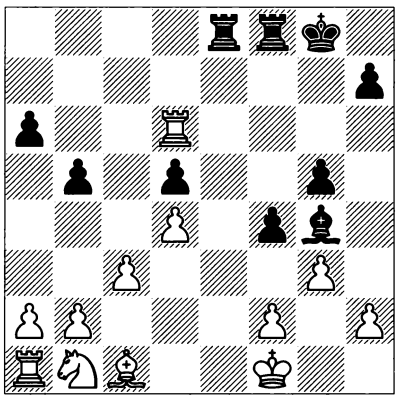
c) 20 ♕d3? ♖ae8 21 ♘d2 (21 ♗d2 ♗e2) 21...♖e1+ 22 ♘f1 ♗f3 −+.

20...♕xf1+!

A piece down, Black exchanges queens.

21 ♔xf1 ♖ae8 *(D)*

W



Despite the extra material, White must be very careful.

22 ♗d2

22 ♖h6? runs into 22...♖f6!.

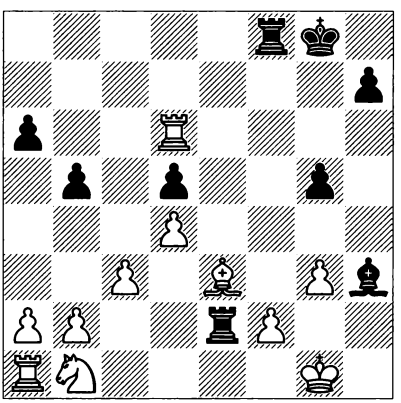
22...♗h3+

22...♖e2? fails to 23 gxf4 gxf4 24 ♖xd5 +−, and 22...fxg3 23 hxg3 ♖e2? (for 23...♗h3+! 24 ♔g1 see the main line) to 24 f3!.

23 ♔g1 fxg3 24 hxg3 ♖e2 25 ♗e3 *(D)*

25 f4 ♖fe8 gives Black at least a draw, while 25 ♖h6 ♖exf2! 26 ♘a3 ♖g2+ 27 ♔h1 ♖xd2 28 ♖xh3 ♖ff2 29 b4 ♔g7! (Ponomariov) leaves White completely tied up.

B

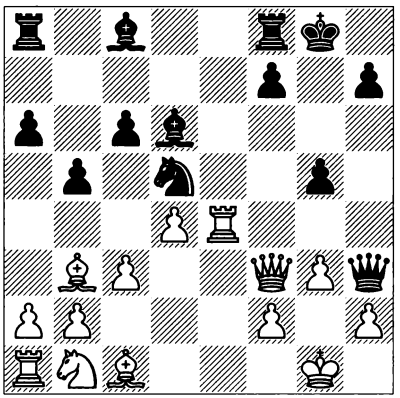


25...♖xe3! 26 fxe3 ♖f1+ 27 ♔h2 g4! 28 ♖xd5

Instead 28 ♘d2 ♖xa1 is certainly not worse for Black. After 28 ♖xd5 a draw was agreed in Ponomariov-Anand, Linares 2002.

B)

16 ♕f3 *(D)*


B

This has been White's most popular move historically, but lately White has been turning to Line C to look for an advantage.

16...♗f5

White must decide how to offer the exchange:

B1: 17 ♗xd5	77
B2: 17 ♗c2	78

Instead 17 ♖e1? loses to 17...♖ae8 18 ♗d2 ♘f4! −+, while 17 ♘d2 is relatively unexplored; e.g., 17...♖ae8 18 ♗xd5 (18 ♗c2 ♘f4!) 18...cxd5 19 ♖e3 ♖xe3 (19...h6 and 19...♗e6 could also be tried) 20 ♕xe3 (20 fxe3 ♖e8 21 a4 is interesting) 20...f6 21 ♘f1 ♗g6 22 f3 ♖e8 23 ♕f2 ♗d3 24 ♗e3 ♗xf1 25 ♖xf1 ♗xg3 26 hxg3 ♖xe3 27 ♕xe3 ½-½ Lima-Grishchuk, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

B1)

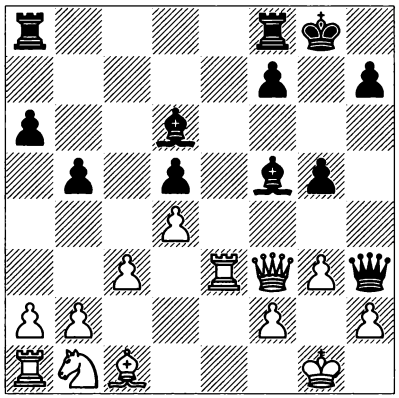
17 ♗xd5

White holds on to his rook for the time being. This line usually leads to an endgame where both sides have chances.

17...cxd5 18 ♖e3 *(D)*

18...♗e4

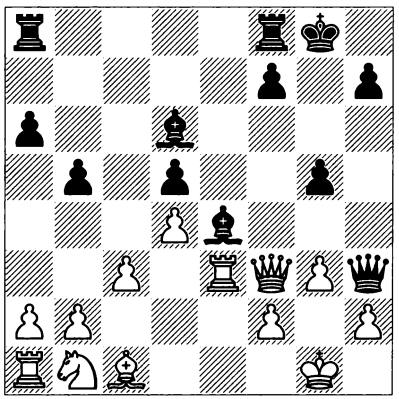
This move drastically changes the nature of the position. Black has a decent alternative in 18...♖ad8 19 ♘d2 ♖fe8, and now:


B

a) 20 a4 b4 21 c4 dxc4 22 ♘xc4 ♗d3! 23 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24 ♘e3 ♗f4 25 ♕g2 ♕h5 26 gxf4 ♕d1+! 27 ♕f1 (27 ♘xd1 ♖e1+ 28 ♕f1 ♖xf1+ 29 ♔g2 ♖xd1 30 fxg5 b3 is an inferior version of the game for White) 27...♕xf1+ 28 ♘xf1 ♖e1 29 fxg5 b3 30 h4 ♗xf1 31 f3 ♗c4+ 32 ♔f2 ♖f1+ 33 ♔g2 ♖d1 was Timman-Short, Tilburg 1991. Clearly only Black can play for a win.

b) 20 b3 ♔g7! 21 ♗b2 ♗g4 22 ♕g2 (after 22 ♕xd5 Black can draw by 22...♗f4! 23 ♕xd8! ♗xe3 24 ♕xe8 ♗xf2+) 22...♕xg2+ 23 ♔xg2 ♖xe3 24 fxe3 ♖e8 25 ♖e1 ♗f5 26 ♔f2 ♗d3 27 ♖d1 ½-½ Leko-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2001. This is a typical endgame where White's extra pawn is all but worthless.

Now back to 18...♗e4 *(D)*, which forces White to sacrifice.


W

19 ♖xe4! dxe4 20 ♕f6

This double attack on d6 and g5 ensures that White will get a second pawn for the exchange.

20...♕g4

This counterattacking move just about forces the queens off. Worse is 20...♗f4? 21 ♗xf4 gxf4 22 ♕xf4 f5 23 ♘d2 intending ♘f1-e3 with a big advantage for White.

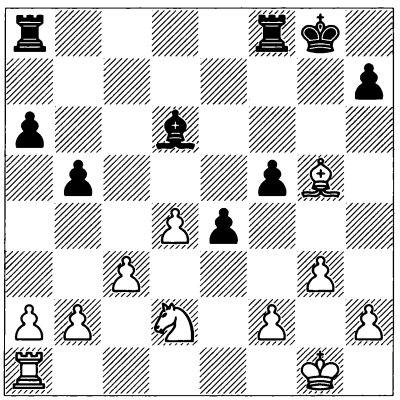
21 ♕xg5+

Taking the bishop is bad: 21 ♕xd6? ♕d1+ 22 ♔g2 ♕xc1 ∓.

21 ♘d2 ♖ae8 22 ♘f1 (22 ♕xd6 e3 23 fxe3 ♖xe3 looks rather dangerous for White) 22...♗e7 (22...♖e6 23 ♕xg5+ ♕xg5 24 ♗xg5 ♖g6 25 ♗d2 f5 is similar to the main continuation) 23 ♕xa6 f5 24 ♕xb5 f4 was agreed drawn in this unclear position in Timman-Ivanchuk, Linares 1991.

21...♕xg5 22 ♗xg5 f5 23 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



Many games have been contested in this important ending. White has two pawns for the exchange, so materially speaking he is doing quite well, especially if he can stabilize the position. Black, on the other hand, must open lines for his rooks.

23...♖ae8

Black intends to use his kingside pawns. Instead 23...♔f7 24 ♔f1 (24 a4, 24 f3 and 24 h4 have all been tried as well) 24...♔e6 25 ♔e2 ♔d5 26 ♔e3 ♖ac8 27 ♗f4! ♗xf4+ 28 ♔xf4 was Timmerman-Vitomskis, corr. 1996. White intends to play ♖c1, b3, ♔e3 and c4+, mobilizing his pawns.

24 a4 f4 25 axb5

After 25 ♖e1 e3 26 fxe3 fxg3 27 hxg3 ♗xg3 Black's active rooks give him good play.

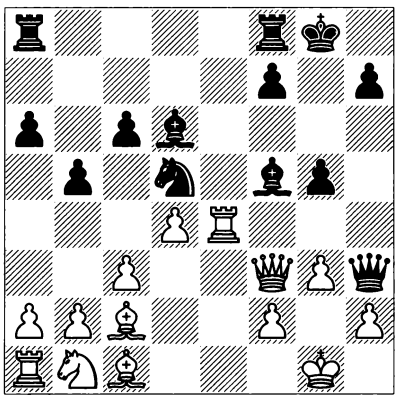
25...axb5 26 gxf4 ♗xf4 27 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 28 ♖e1 ♔f7

= Timmerman-Tarnowiecki, corr. 2000.

B2)

17 ♗c2 *(D)*

B



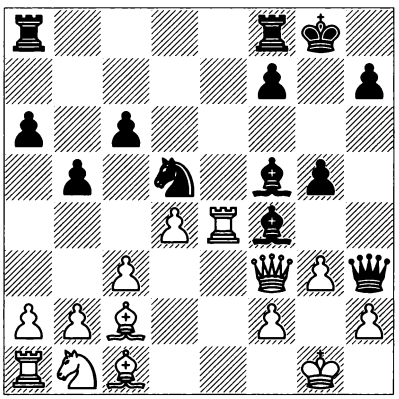
White prefers to hold on to his strong light-squared bishop, but this is risky.

17...♗xe4

Taking the rook immediately is the most forcing continuation. Instead 17...♘f4?! 18 ♗xf4 gxf4 19 ♘d2 is bad for Black, as is 17...♖ae8?! 18 ♗xg5 ♗xe4 19 ♗xe4 ♖e6 20 ♘d2 ±.

However, Harding's idea 17...♗f4!? *(D)* is worth considering.

W



White has:

a) 18 ♘d2?! and here:

a1) 18...♘f6 19 ♖e1! ♗xc2 (19...♖ae8 20 ♘e4! ♘xe4 21 ♗xf4 ♗g4 22 ♕g2 ± is given by Nunn) 20 gxf4 g4 was Wang Zili-Ye Jiangchuan, Chinese Ch 1988. Now 21 ♕xc6 is critical, because 21...♖ae8 can be met by 22 ♖e5!.

a2) 18...♖ae8 19 ♖xe8?! (White should try 19 ♕d1!?) 19...♖xe8 20 ♘e4 g4 21 ♕h1 ♗xc1

(21...♗xg3!? 22 fxg3 ♗xe4 23 ♗xe4 ♘f6 is another idea) 22 ♖xc1 ♕h6 23 ♖f1 (23 ♖e1 ♕d2! −+) 23...♕g6! 24 ♖e1 ♔g7 25 h4 ♘f6 26 h5 ♕g5! 27 f4 gxf3 28 ♕xf3 ♗xe4 29 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 30 ♖xe4 ♕c1+ 31 ♔f2 ♕xb2+ 32 ♕e2 ♕xe2+ 33 ♖xe2 ♖xe2+ 34 ♔xe2 ♔h6 35 ♔f3 ♔g5! −+ Sacerdotali-Hansson, corr. 2004.

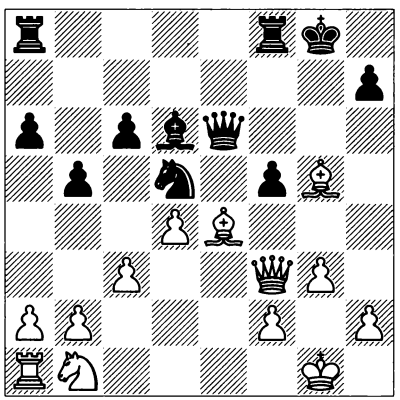
b) 18 ♗xf4 is a better try for White. 18...gxf4 (18...♘xf4 19 ♘d2 ±) 19 ♘d2 ♗xe4 20 ♗xe4! fxg3 (20...♖ad8 21 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 22 ♕xf4 is better for White) 21 hxg3 ♕h6 has occurred several times in correspondence play. 22 ♘b3 ♖ad8 (22...♘e7 23 ♔g2 f5 24 ♗c2 ±) 23 ♘c5 ♖d6 24 ♘xa6 (24 ♘d7 ♖e8 25 ♘e5 looks like an improvement) 24...♖f6 25 ♕d3 ♕g5 26 ♗g2 ♖e8 27 ♘c5 ♖xf2! 28 ♔xf2 ♖e3 29 ♕c2 ♖xg3 30 ♖g1 ♕h4 31 ♔e2 ♕h2 gave Black an attack in Sakai-Schulze, corr. 2003.

18 ♗xe4 ♕e6

For 18...♖ae8?!, see 17...♖ae8?! above.

19 ♗xg5 f5 *(D)*

W



20 ♗d3

20 ♗xd5?! cxd5 21 ♘d2 f4 22 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 23 gxf4 ♖a7! (this is a good idea, well known from the Sveshnikov Sicilian!) 24 ♔h1 ♖e7 25 ♖g1+ ♔h8 26 ♘f1 ♕e4 27 ♔g2 ♕xf3+ 28 ♔xf3 ♖e1 29 ♖h1 ♖e4 ∓ Topalov-Adams, Sarajevo 2000.

20...f4

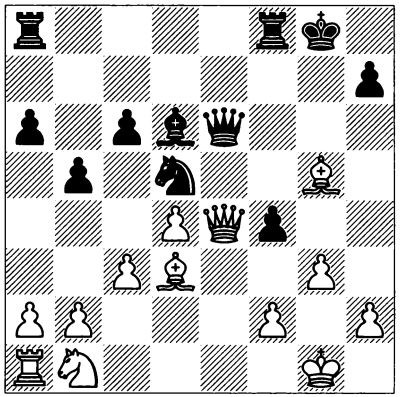
This is a tough decision. Black can also throw in 20...h6. After 21 ♗d2 Black has:

a) 21...♖a7 22 ♘a3 ♖g7 (22...f4 23 ♖e1 ♕f6 24 g4 ±) 23 ♖e1 ♕f6 24 c4! gives White the initiative.

b) 21...f4 22 ♕h5 ♖a7 23 ♘a3 ♖g7 24 ♖e1 ♕f6 25 ♖f1!? could be tried.

21 ♕e4 *(D)*

B



White offers an exchange of queens while stepping up the pressure on the light squares. Both sides must tread carefully.

21...♕d7!

This move has enjoyed some success in correspondence games. Other moves look worse, but 'c' is of interest:

a) 21...♕xe4?! 22 ♗xe4 ♖ae8 23 ♘d2 ♖e6 24 ♔g2 gives White excellent compensation for the exchange in the ending.

b) 21...♕h3?! 22 ♗h4! ♖a7 23 ♘d2 (the immediate 23 ♗f1 is also possible) 23...♖g7 24 ♗f1! ♕d7 (24...♕xh4 25 ♕e6+ ♔h8 26 ♕xd6 also favours White) 25 ♖e1 ♗e7 26 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 27 ♕b1 fxg3 28 hxg3 ♖fe8 29 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 30 ♘f3 and with his knight settling on e5, White had good compensation in Kr.Georgiev-Lukacs, Baile Herculane 1982.

c) 21...♕f7!? 22 ♘d2 fxg3! (after 22...♖ae8 23 ♕f3 ♕g7 24 ♕h5 White keeps up the pressure) 23 fxg3 ♖ae8 24 ♕g2 ♘e3 and Black has no problems according to Pavlović, who continues 25 ♗xe3 ♖xe3 26 ♖f1 ♕e6 27 ♗e4 ♖xf1+ 28 ♔xf1 ♗e7!, when Black can fight for the initiative.

22 ♘d2 ♖ae8 23 ♕h1

23 ♕g2 looks more natural, but it runs into 23...♕g4 24 ♗h4 f3 25 ♕f1 ♘f4 with a strong attack.

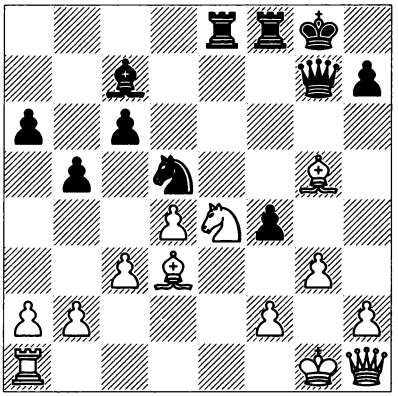
23...♕g7 24 ♘e4 ♗c7 *(D)*

Black's well-centralized pieces give him good counterplay.

25 ♗h4?! f3

Now the white queen is entombed and White is running out of moves.

W



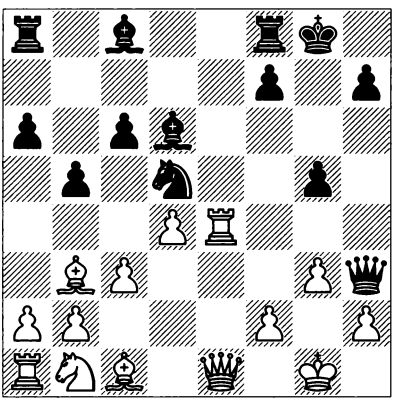
26 ♔f1?! b4 27 ♖d1 bxc3 28 ♘xc3 ♘xc3 29 bxc3 ♗a5

Now 30 ♖c1 ♕h6! 31 ♖c2 ♗xc3 32 ♖xc3 ♕d2 is lights out, so White resigned in Hallengren-Lakatos, corr. 2001.

C)

16 ♕e1 *(D)*

B



This modern finesse is designed to improve on Line A above. The main point is that 16...f5 can be met by 17 ♗xd5+ cxd5 18 ♖e6, when 18...f4? loses to 19 ♖xd6 because 19...♗g4 does not come with tempo. However, 18...♗xe6 19 ♕xe6+ ♔g7 may well be playable, and was covered by transposition under Line A in note 'b' to Black's 18th move. Black can also play a little more calmly. Because e1 is not the ideal square for White's queen, Black should be able to hold the balance. We examine:

C1: 16...f5 80
C2: 16...♗f5 81

Instead 16...♘f6 17 ♘d2 ♕h5 18 ♕d1 ♕xd1+ 19 ♗xd1 ♘xe4 20 ♘xe4 ♗e7 21 ♗xg5 ♗xg5 22 ♘xg5 ± was Motylev-Tkachev, Kazan 2005.

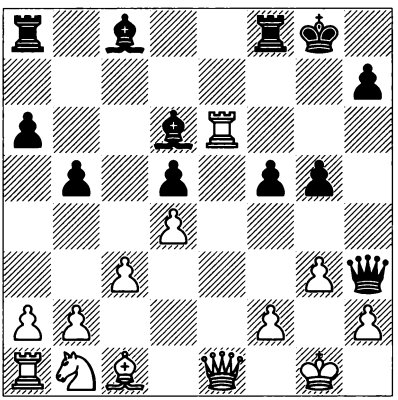
C1)

16...f5

The move that 16 ♕e1 is supposed to prevent.

17 ♗xd5+ cxd5 18 ♖e6 *(D)*

B



18...♗c7!?

This is Pavlović's idea. As mentioned above, 18...♗xe6 19 ♕xe6+ is covered in note 'b' to Black's 18th move in Line A. If this line works for Black, then both 16 ♕e2 and 16 ♕e1 are harmless.

19 ♗xg5

19 ♖c6 is met by 19...♖a7.

19...♕h5!

19...f4 20 ♖f6 ♗g4 21 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 22 ♘d2 ♕h5 23 ♗h4 ♖e8 24 ♕f1 ♖e2 25 ♘b3 allows White to claim some advantage according to Pavlović, although I think this looks playable for Black as well.

20 ♖c6

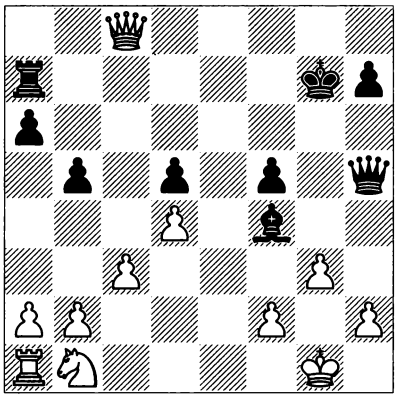
20 ♗e7? ♗xe6 21 ♕xe6+ ♕f7 22 ♕xf7+ ♖xf7 23 ♗c5 ♖e8 24 ♔f1 f4 25 g4 f3 26 h3 ♖e2 (Pavlović) looks winning for Black.

20...♖a7 21 ♗f4

White must avoid 21 ♕c1?! f4 22 ♗h6? ♗h3! –+ and 21 ♗h6 ♖e8 22 ♕c1?! f4 23 ♖f6? ♗d8 24 ♖d6 ♖f7! (improving over Pavlović's analysis) threatening 25...fxg3 26 fxg3 ♖f2! with a mating attack. Black wins after both 25 ♗xf4 ♗c7 and 25 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 26 ♗xf4 ♗h3.

21...♗xf4 22 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 23 ♕e6+ ♔g7 24 ♕xc8 *(D)*

B



It looks like the tactics have worked out for White, but Black has a nice resource.

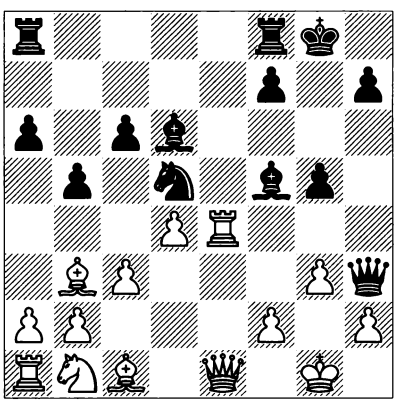
24...♗c1! 25 ♘a3 ♗xb2 26 ♕c5 ♖f7 27 ♖e1 f4 28 ♕b4 ♗xa3 29 ♕xa3 ♕h3 30 gxf4 ♕g4+

with a draw – Pavlović.

C2)

16...♗f5 *(D)*

W



17 ♘d2 h6

17...♘f6 18 f3 c5!? 19 ♕e3 h6 20 ♕f2 cxd4 21 cxd4 ♖ad8 (taking on e4 is another idea) 22 ♖e2 ♗d3 23 ♖e3 ♕f5 24 ♘e4 ♘xe4 25 fxe4 ♗xe4 26 ♕xf5 ♗xf5 27 ♗d2 ♔g7 ½-½ Schekachev-Gustafsson, Austrian Team Ch 2004/5.

18 f3 ♔g7 19 a4 ♗xe4 20 fxe4 ♖ae8 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♘f1

After 22 ♕f2?! f5! 23 e5 (23 exd5?! f4 gives Black a decisive attack) 23...f4 24 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ 25 ♔xg2 ♘e3+ 26 ♔g1 fxg3 27 hxg3 ♗xe5 28 dxe5 ♖xe5 Black has an attack according to Anand.

22...♕g4

Also possible is 22...f5 23 e5 f4 – Anand.

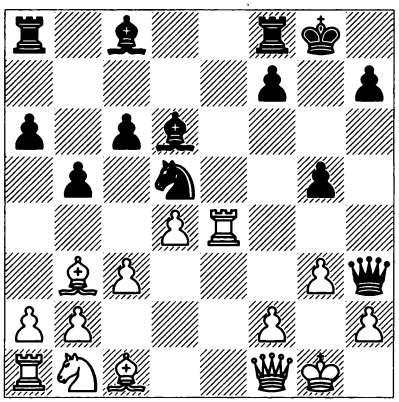
23 ♗c2 ♖e7 24 ♗d2 ♖fe8

Now instead of 25 e5?! f6!, when Black seized the initiative in Anand-Bacrot, Sofia 2006, Anand gives 25 ♕d1 ♕xd1 26 ♖xd1 ♖xe4 27 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 28 ♔f2 =.

D)

16 ♕f1 *(D)*

B



This has been White's most popular move of late. Black can exchange queens and hope to carry his initiative into the endgame, or he can retreat and play for an attack.

D1: 16...♕xf1+ 81
D2: 16...♕h6!? 83
D3: 16...♕h5 85

Also, there is the typical prophylactic move 16...h6!?, which is untested but may be worth a try.

D1)

16...♕xf1+ 17 ♔xf1 *(D)*

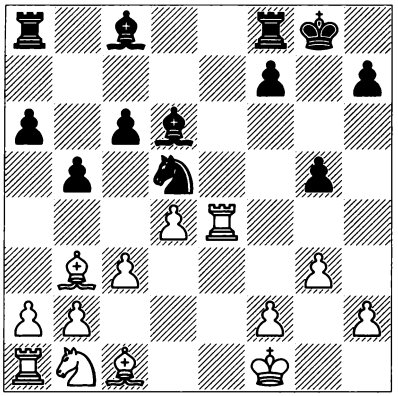
17...♗f5

17...h6 18 ♘d2 ♗f5 transposes to line 'b' in the next note, while 17...f5 18 ♖e1 f4 19 ♘d2 is better for White, because after 19...fxg3 20 hxg3 ♗xg3 21 ♘e4 ± he wins back the pawn with the initiative.

18 ♘d2

Even in the endgame, White should offer the exchange. The passive 18 ♖e1 ♖ae8 19 ♗e3 gives Black a pleasant choice between

B



19...♖e6 intending ...♖fe8 and 19...♗h3+ intending ...f5.

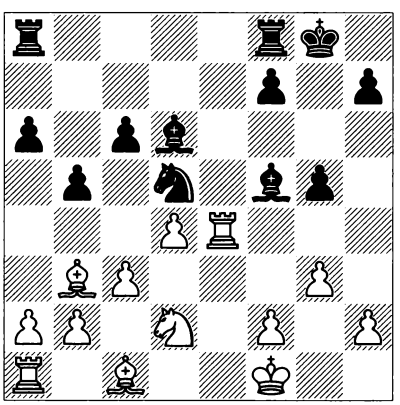
White can also play 18 f3 h6, and then:

a) 19 ♘d2 ♗xe4 20 fxe4 ♘c7 (intending ...c5, ...cxd4 and ...♘e6) 21 ♔g2 c5 22 e5 ♗e7 23 ♘e4 cxd4 24 cxd4 a5 25 ♗e3 a4 26 ♗d1 ♘d5 27 ♗f2 gives White enough compensation for the exchange but no more than that, Anand-Svidler, FIDE World Ch, San Luis 2005.

b) 19 ♖e1 ♖fe8 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22 ♔f2 a5 23 a3 ♗d3 is a typical Marshall endgame. The players agreed to split the point here in Peng Xiaomin-Grishchuk, China-Russia match, Shanghai 2001.

We now return to 18 ♘d2 *(D)*:

B



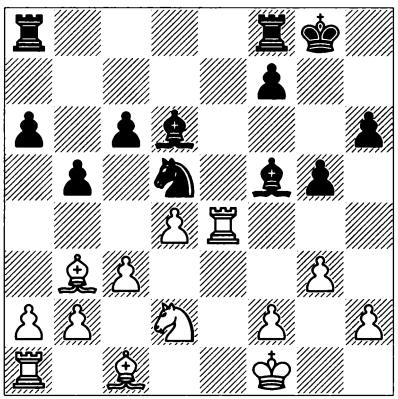
18...♖ad8

By protecting the d6-bishop, Black is ready to play 19...♗xe4 20 ♘xe4 h6. Black has also tried:

a) 18...♖ae8 19 f3 ♘f6 20 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 21 ♔f2 g4 22 ♗d1 gxf3 23 ♘xf3 ♘g4+ 24 ♔g1 c5 25 ♗d2 ♘e3 26 ♗xe3 ♖xe3 is given as 'with compensation' in *Informator*, but it doesn't look like enough. After 27 ♔f2 ♖e8 28 ♗b3 c4 29 ♗d1 a5 30 ♗e2 a4 31 a3 ♗f8 32 ♘h4 ♗h3 33 ♗f3 ♗h6 34 ♘g2 ♗xg2 35 ♗xg2 ± White won handily in Motylev-Sargisian, Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2006.

b) 18...h6 *(D)* is a typical move.

W



Black protects the g5-pawn to lessen the effect of a knight coming to e4 after Black grabs the exchange. After 19 ♖e1 (19 f3 is Anand-Svidler in the note to White's 18th move above) 19...♖ae8 20 ♘f3 there is:

b1) 20...♗h3+ 21 ♔g1 ♗g4 22 ♘e5 f6 23 ♘d3 ♗f5 24 ♖d1 ♗g4 25 ♖d2 ♔g7 26 a4 ♘b6 27 axb5 axb5 28 ♗d1 ♗f5 29 ♗f3 ♖a8 30 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 31 ♖d1 ± Volokitin-Ponomariov, Foros 2006. Black does not have anything for the pawn.

b2) 20...g4 21 ♗xh6 (or 21 ♘g1 ♗d3+ 22 ♘e2 ♖e6 23 ♗xd5 cxd5 24 ♗e3 ♖fe8 25 ♖ed1 ♗e4 with compensation, Motylev-Onishchuk, Biel 2007) 21...gxf3 22 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 is a rather unclear endgame. 23 ♗d1 ♗g4 (23...♗h3+ 24 ♔g1 ♗g2 25 a4 ♔h8 26 ♖e4 b4 27 c4 ♘f4 28 gxf4 ♖g8 29 c5 ½-½ Volokitin-Sargisian, Bundesliga 2005/6) 24 a4 ♖d8 25 axb5 axb5 26 ♔g1 ♔g7 27 h3 ♗xh3 28 ♗xf3 ♗e6 is probably a little better for White because of his slight material advantage, but Black drew without difficulty in Bacrot-Anand, Mainz rapid 2007.

We return to 18...♖ad8 *(D)*:

19 f3

19 ♖e1 ♖de8 20 ♘f3 g4 is even better for Black than the lines above because after 21 ♗h6 gxf3 22 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 (which led to a draw in Kariakin-Grishchuk, Turin Olympiad 2006),

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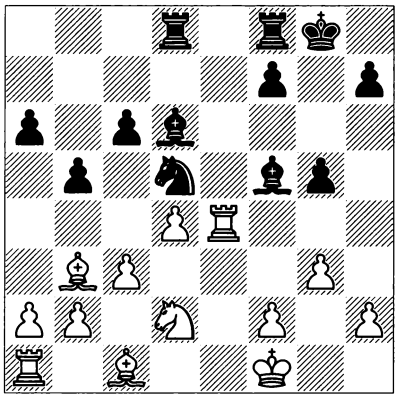


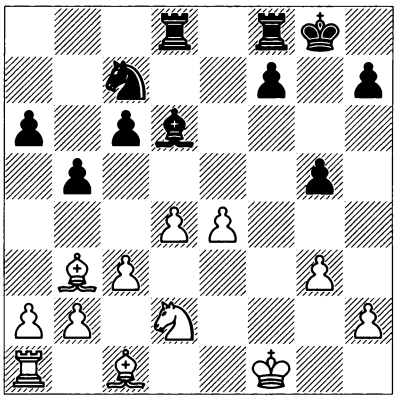
compared to the endgames in line 'b2' just above, Black still has his h-pawn.

19...♗xe4 20 fxe4

20 ♘xe4 h6 should be alright for Black.

20...♘c7 *(D)*

W



21 a4!

White plays on the entire board. Other moves:

a) 21 ♘f3 is not very testing. 21...h6 22 ♗e3 ♔g7 23 ♗c2 ♖fe8 24 ♔f2 a5 gave Black counterplay in Grigoriants-Lalić, Cappelle la Grande 2007.

b) 21 ♔g2 c5 (21...h6 is more solid) 22 ♘f3 (White should seek to punish Black by 22 e5 ♗e7 23 dxc5 with the point 23...♗xc5 24 ♘e4) 22...h6 23 ♗e3 cxd4 24 ♘xd4 ♖fe8 25 ♖f1 ♖d7 26 ♖f6 (or 26 ♘f5 ♗f8 27 ♔f3) 26...♖xe4 27 ♔f3 ♖e5 28 ♘f5 ♘e8 29 ♗xf7+? (29 ♘xh6+ .♔g7 30 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7+ 31 ♘xf7 ♖f5+ 32 ♔e4 ♖xf7 33 ♗xf7 ♔xf7 34 ♗xg5 is level) 29...♖xf7 30 ♘xh6+ ♔g7 31 ♖xf7+ ♔xh6 ∓ Z.Almasi-Harikrishna, George Marx Memorial, Paks 2006.

21...h6

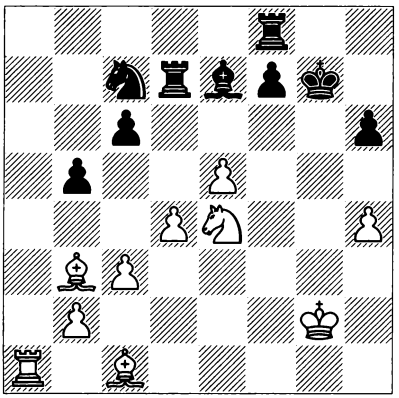
After 21...♖fe8 22 axb5 (this looks premature; instead 22 e5 ♗e7 23 ♘e4 h6 24 h4 is similar to the main line) 22...axb5 23 e5 ♗e7 24 ♘e4 ♖a8 25 ♖b1 (not pretty, but White still seems to have good chances) 25...h6 26 h4 ♘e6 27 ♗xe6 fxe6 28 hxg5 hxg5 29 ♗xg5 ♗xg5 30 ♘xg5 ♔g7 31 ♔e2 left White with good compensation in Vachier-Lagrave – Jenni, European Ch, Plovdiv 2008.

22 ♔g2 ♖d7 23 h4! gxh4 24 e5 ♗e7 25 gxh4 ♔g7

After 25...♗xh4 26 ♘f3 White wins back the pawn and keeps up the pressure.

26 axb5 axb5 27 ♘e4 *(D)*

B



27...♖a8?!

Now Black's position quickly comes undone. 27...♗xh4 must be a better try. White can regain the pawn with 28 ♗xh6+ ♔xh6 29 ♖h1, but after 29...♖g8+ 30 ♔f3 ♔g7 31 ♖xh4 ♖h8 Black has good chances to hold.

28 ♖xa8 ♘xa8 29 ♘g3 ♗f8 30 ♘f5+ ♔h8 31 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 32 ♘xh6 ♔g7 33 ♘xf7!

White had excellent winning chances in Yakovenko-Zhang Zhong, China-Russia match, Ergun 2006.

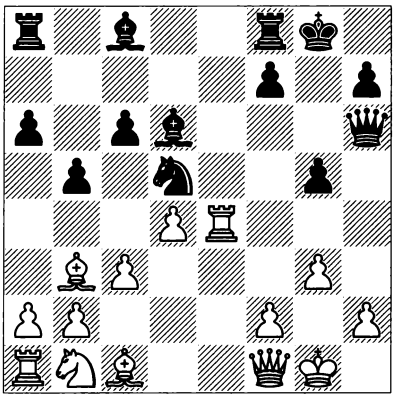
D2)

16...♕h6!? *(D)*

This is an interesting idea recommended by Pavlović.

It has not been tried much in grandmaster practice or in correspondence play, but that should not necessarily discourage Black. Pavlović is an experienced grandmaster and his

W



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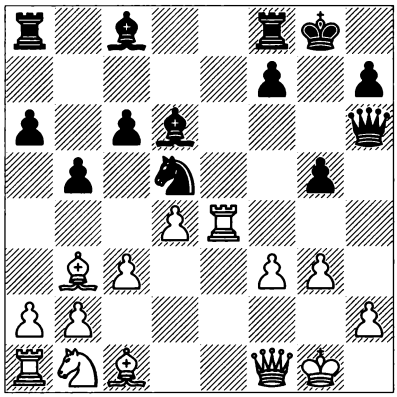


analysis is very interesting. At first sight this move looks rather odd, because the advance h4 looks like it will exploit the pin on the c1-h6 diagonal, but this is not so easy to implement (the immediate 17 h4 would be met by 17...♕g6, hitting White's rook).

17 ♖e1

This move is the first choice of most analysis engines. It is possible they are right, since other moves do not appear to give White anything clear:

a) 17 ♘d2 f5! 18 ♖e1 f4 and here:

a1) 19 ♘e4 ♗g4 20 ♕g2 (20 ♗d1 ♗xd1 21 ♖xd1 ♗c7 22 ♗d2 ♖ae8 23 ♕d3 ♖e6! {intending ...♕h5 and ...♖h6} 24 f3?! fxg3 25 hxg3 ♗xg3 26 ♘xg3 ♕h3 ∓) 20...♗h3 21 ♕h1 ♗c7 22 ♗d2 ♕g6 with compensation – Pavlović.

a2) 19 ♕g2 ♗h3 20 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 (this is a typical method, essentially gaining a tempo) 21 ♕h1 cxd5 22 ♕xd5 ♗g4 23 a4 (23 ♘e4 ♗f3 24 ♕xd6 ♕h3 25 ♕e5+ is a draw) 23...♖ad8 (23...♖ae8!? – Pavlović) 24 ♕c6 (24 ♕h1 ♖de8 25 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 26 ♘f1 ♖e1 27 ♕a8+ ♕f8 28 ♕xf8+ ♗xf8 29 b3 bxa4 30 bxa4 ♗h3 31 ♗b2 ♖e2 32 ♗c1 ♖e1 with a repetition – Pavlović) 24...fxg3 25 fxg3 ♖f2 26 ♖e8+ ♔g7 27 h4 ♖xe8 28 ♕xe8 ♗xg3. Pavlović stops here, concluding that Black is doing fine. Even trading queens leaves White under pressure: 29 ♕e7+ ♖f7 30 ♕xg5+ ♕xg5 31 hxg5 ♗h3 with excellent play; for example, 32 axb5 ♖f2 (32...axb5!?) with at least a draw. 33 bxa6? loses to 33...♖g2+ 34 ♔h1 ♖e2.

b) 17 f3 *(D)* has been played successfully at grandmaster level, but there appears to be at least one neat solution to Black's problems here too:

b1) 17...♔h8 18 ♘d2 ♗h3 (18...♘f4!? 19 gxf4 gxf4 20 ♔f2 ♖g8) 19 ♕e1 (19 ♕f2 f5 20 ♖e1 ♖ae8 21 a4 ♕g6 22 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 23 axb5 ♘f4 24 bxa6?! ♘d3 25 a7 ♘xf2 26 a8♕ ♘d3 ∓) 19...♘f4 20 ♘f1 (20 gxf4? gxf4 21 ♔h1 ♖g8 22 ♖e2 ♕g6! 23 ♕f2 ♖ae8! 24 ♘e4 ♖xe4! 25 fxe4 f3 –+) 20...♕g7 21 ♕f2 ♘d3 22 ♕d2 ♘xc1 23 ♖xc1 f5 24 ♖e6 ± Kr.Georgiev-Tseshkovsky, Moscow 1985.

b2) 17...f5! is Pavlović's idea. 18 ♖e2 (worse is 18 ♖e1 f4 19 g4 ♗xg4! 20 fxg4 f3 ∓) 18...f4 19 g4 ♗xg4! 20 fxg4 f3 21 ♖f2 ♖ae8 gives Black an attack:

b21) 22 ♗xd5+ cxd5 23 ♔h1 ♖e2 24 ♖xe2 fxe2 25 ♕xe2 ♖f1+ 26 ♔g2 ♖xc1 27 ♕e8+ ♕f8 28 ♕xf8+ ♗xf8 is clearly awful for White.

b22) 22 ♘a3 and now:

b221) 22...♕h4!? 23 ♗d2 ♖e6 and now White must avoid 24 ♔h1?, as Pavlović's suggestion 24...♔g7!, threatening ...♖e2, leaves White with no adequate defence. White should try instead 24 ♖e1, when he might hang on.

b222) 22...♖e4! may be even stronger.

17...♔h8!?

Worse is 17...f5?! 18 ♕g2! ♖a7 19 ♗xd5+ cxd5 20 ♕xd5+ ♖af7 21 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 22 ♕xd6 f4 23 ♖e5 ±.

18 h4 *(D)*

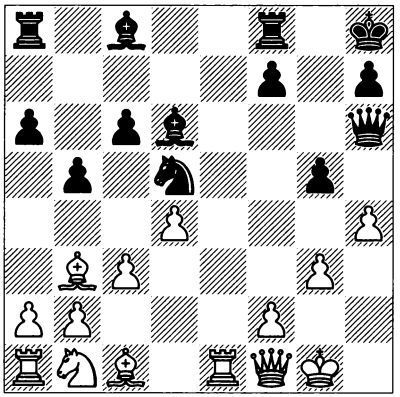
This is an obvious move but it meets a thematic rejoinder. Other moves:

a) 18 ♗xd5 cxd5 19 h4 ♕h5! 20 ♗xg5 f6 21 ♗e3 ♖a7! 22 ♘d2 ♖g7 again with an attack – Pavlović. This becomes clearer after 23 ♕g2 ♖fg8 (planning to detonate on g3) 24 ♘f1 ♕xh4 –+, intending ...♗h3 or ...♗xg3.

b) 18 ♘d2 ♗h3 19 ♕e2 (after 19 ♕d3 ♖ae8 Black has the initiative) 19...♘f4!? 20 ♕d1

♗f5 21 ♘f3 (after 21 gxf4 gxf4 22 ♔h1 ♖g8 Black has a strong initiative) 21...♘h3+ 22 ♔g2 ♖ae8 gives Black counterplay – Pavlović.

B



18...♘f4!

We shall see this tactical justification of Black's play more than once.

19 hxg5

19 gxf4? gxf4 is suicidal.

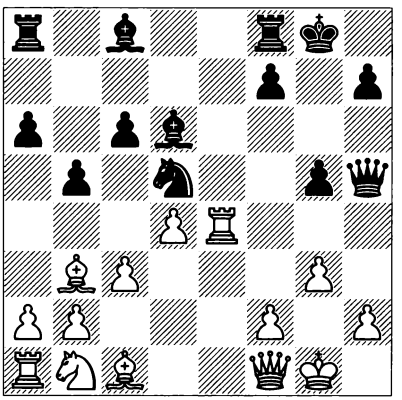
19...♘h3+ 20 ♔g2 ♕g6

Now 21 f4 h6 22 gxh6(?) ♖g8, with an attack, was given by Pavlović. Perhaps 21 ♕e2!? is more testing, intending 21...♘xg5 22 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 23 ♘d2 or 21...♗f5 22 ♘d2. The best reply is probably 21...f6.

D3)

16...♕h5 *(D)*

W



As in the previous line, Black prefers to play the middlegame, but putting the queen on this square has been seen a lot more in practice.

17 ♘d2

White has tried several other moves:

a) 17 f3 ♗f5 (worse are both 17...♗h3?! 18 ♕f2 f5 19 ♖e6 f4 20 ♖xd6 fxg3 21 hxg3 ♖xf3 22 ♖xd5!, as given by Nunn, and 17...f5 18 ♖e2 ♗d7 19 a4 ♖ae8 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖a7, which was better for White in Komiagina-Shadrina, Russian Women's Ch, Oriol 2006) 18 ♘d2 transposes to the main line.

b) 17 ♖e1?! ♗h3 18 ♗d1 g4 19 ♕d3 f5 20 c4 ♖ae8 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 22 ♗d2 ♘f4! 23 gxf4? ♗xf4 24 ♗e2 (24 ♕c3 b4! wins for Black after 25 ♕xb4 ♗f1! 26 ♗xf4 ♕h3) 24...♖xe2! was L.Johnson-Cleghorn, corr. 1960. If 25 ♕xe2, then 25...♗xh2+ 26 ♔xh2 ♗f1+ wins.

c) 17 ♗d1 ♕g6 18 ♘d2 ♗f5 19 ♖e1 ♖ae8 20 ♘f3 ♗d3 (or even 20...f6!?) 21 ♕g2 ♗e4 gives Black compensation.

d) 17 ♗d2?! ♗f5 (also possible is 17...f5 18 ♖e1 f4) 18 ♖e1 ♗h3 19 ♕e2 ♗g4 20 ♕f1 ♖ae8 21 ♘a3 ♗h3 22 ♕d3 ♘f4! 23 ♗xf4 (23 gxf4? loses to 23...gxf4 24 ♔h1 f3) 23...gxf4 24 ♘c2 ♗g4 25 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 26 ♖e1 ♗e2 27 ♕d2 and now 27...♕f3 gave Black a strong initiative in Smolensky-Heffner, corr. 1985, while the direct 27...f3 may be even stronger.

e) 17 ♕e2?! ♕g6! 18 ♖e8 ♗f5 19 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 20 ♘d2 ♗d3 21 ♕e1 ♘f4! 22 gxf4 gxf4+ 23 ♔h1 ♔h8 24 ♕g1 ♕f6 25 f3 ♖e8! 26 a4 (26 ♘e4 ♖xe4!) 26...♕h4 and now not 27 ♘e4? ♖g8 –+ Ernst-Hebden, Gausdal 1987. If White tries 27 axb5 then 27...♖e1 (worse are 27...axb5 28 ♗xf7 ♖e1? 29 ♖a8+ and 27...cxb5 28 ♖xa6 ♖g8 29 ♖a8 ♖xa8 30 ♗xf7) 28 bxa6 ♖xg1+ 29 ♔xg1 ♕e1+ 30 ♔g2 ♕e2+ 31 ♔g1 ♗xa6 ∓ gives Black good winning chances.

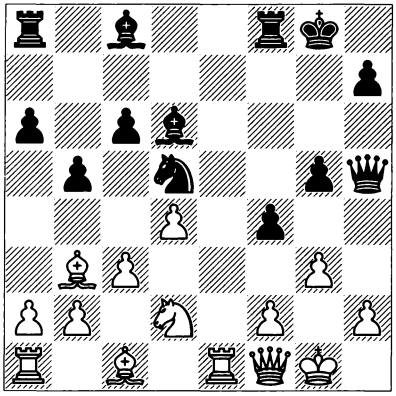
17...♗f5

17...♘f6?! was played in Vachier-Lagrave – Fressinet, Paris 2007, which was drawn after 18 f3?! ♘xe4 19 fxe4 ♗h3 20 ♕f3 ♕xf3 21 ♘xf3 h6 22 ♗e3 ♔g7 23 a4 ♗e6 24 ♗c2 ♖fb8 – if anyone is better at this point, it is Black. However, Renet gives 18 ♕e2! ♕g6 19 ♖e3 ♘g4 20 ♖e8 ♗d7 21 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 22 ♘e4 ±.

The main alternative for Black is 17...f5. This has a dubious appearance, but may stand up to analytical scrutiny:

a) 18 ♖e1 was given as dubious in *New in Chess Yearbook 81*, but White may be able to fight for an advantage even with this move. 18...f4 *(D)* and here:

W

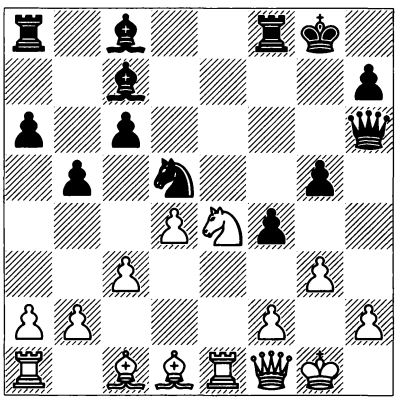


a1) 19 ♗d1?! f3! 20 ♘e4?! ♗h3 21 ♕d3 ♖ae8 22 ♗d2? ♖xe4!! 23 ♕xe4 ♗xg3! 24 ♗xf3 ♗xh2+ 25 ♔xh2 ♗g4+ 26 ♔g1 ♗xf3 27 ♕e6+ ♔g7 28 ♕e5+ ♖f6 29 ♕h2 ♖h6 0-1 Vachier-Lagrave – Svidler, Donostia 2009.

a2) 19 ♘e4 ♗h3?! (19...♗g4 is more to the point – Nunn; definitely not 19...fxg3? 20 hxg3 ♗g4 21 ♗xg5 ♗xg3 22 ♘xg3 ♕xg5 23 ♖e5 ♕h4 24 ♖xd5 and White wins, Z.Almasi-Gyimesi, Hungarian Team Ch 2005/6) and instead of 20 ♕d3?! ♖ae8 21 ♗d2?! ♗f5 22 c4 (Sambuev-Khrushchov, Geller Memorial, Moscow 2006) 22...bxc4 23 ♗xc4 ♕g6 24 f3 fxg3 ∓, White can improve with 20 ♗d1! g4 21 ♕d3 ♖ae8 22 ♗d2 ♗c7 23 ♗c2 ±, as given by Renet.

b) 18 ♗d1 ♕h6 (worse is 18...g4? 19 ♖e1 f4 20 ♘e4 ♗c7 21 ♗b3 ♔h8 22 gxf4 ♘xf4 23 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 24 ♕g2 ♖a7 25 ♖e2 ♖e7 26 ♘g3 ♕g5 27 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 28 ♕xc6 +– Motylev-Beliavsky, Wijk aan Zee 2006) 19 ♖e1 f4 20 ♘e4 ♗c7 *(D)* (20...♗h3?! 21 ♕e2 ♖ae8 22 ♕h5! ♕xh5 23 ♗xh5 ♖e6 24 ♗d2 ± Shabalov-Vescovi, São Paulo 2009) and now:

W



b1) 21 ♗f3 ♗h3 22 ♕d3 ♖f7 23 ♗d2 ♖af8 24 ♗h1 ♖g7 25 ♗f3 ♖gf7 26 ♗h1 ♖g7 27 ♗f3 ♖gf7 was drawn in Svidler-Leko, Morelia/Linares 2007. A weird sequence and outcome.

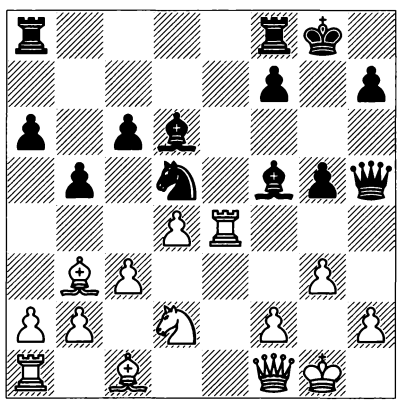
b2) 21 ♗d2 ♗f5 (not good is 21...♔h8?! 22 ♕e2 ♗f5 23 ♕h5! ♕xh5 24 ♗xh5 ♗xe4 25 ♖xe4 fxg3 26 fxg3 ♘f6 27 ♖e7 ♗xg3 28 hxg3 ♘xh5 29 ♔g2 ± Vallejo Pons-Sargisian, Team event, Calvia 2007) 22 ♘c5 and here:

b21) 22...♖f7?! 23 ♕e2 ♖af8 24 ♕h5 ♕f6 25 g4! ♗g6 26 ♕h3 (Kosten gives 26 ♕h6 ♖e7 27 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 28 ♗f3 ♗d6 29 ♖e1 +–) 26...♖e7 27 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 28 ♗f3 ♖e8 29 ♕f1 ± Shirov-Akopian, Karlovy Vary 2007.

b22) 22...♗d6! 23 ♗f3 ♔h8 24 ♘b7 ♗b8 25 a4 ♖a7 26 axb5 (26 ♘c5 ♗h3 27 ♕e2 ♖af7 gives Black good counterplay) 26...♖xb7 27 ♖xa6 fxg3 28 fxg3 (Galkin-P.H.Nielsen, European Ch, Dresden 2007) 28...♗g6! is OK for Black; e.g., 29 c4 (29 ♕g2 ♖bf7) 29...♖bf7 30 ♖a3 ♗d6! 31 c5 ♗h5 32 cxd6 ♗xf3 33 d7 ♗h5 34 ♕h3! ♕f6 with a likely draw.

We now return to 17...♗f5 *(D)*:

W



18 f3 ♘f6!

This move became well known after Leko used it to defeat Kramnik in a famous game from their 2004 world championship match. Other moves look worse:

a) 18...♗xe4?! 19 fxe4 ♘e3 (19...♘b6 20 e5 ♗e7 21 ♕f5 ♔g7 22 ♘e4 ±) 20 ♕f3 ♕xf3 (also bad is 20...♘g4 21 ♘f1 intending ♗d1 +–) 21 ♘xf3 ♘c4 22 ♘xg5 ±.

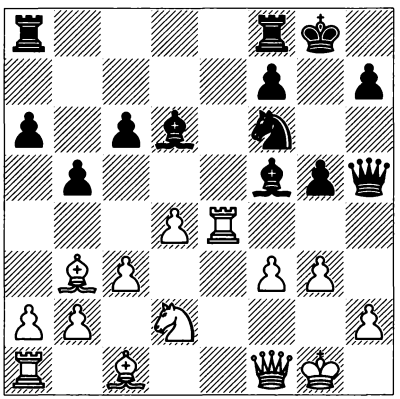
b) 18...♖ae8?! and now:

b1) 19 a4 ♗xe4 20 ♘xe4 ♖e6 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♘xg5 ♖g6 23 f4 ♕g4 24 ♗d1 ♕f5 25 ♗e2 ± Osorio-Grabner, corr. 2005.

b2) 19 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 20 ♘e4 (this is a typical idea – White returns the pawn and hopes that his bishop-pair and Black's weakened kingside will ensure some advantage) 20...♗xe4 21 fxe4 ♖xe4 22 ♗d1 g4 and now instead of 23 ♕f2 ♖e6 24 a4 b4 25 ♗d2 bxc3 26 bxc3 c5, which was rather unclear in Elyakim-Krempel, corr. 1990, White could play 23 a4. If Black tries to simplify with 23...♘e3 White has 24 ♕e2! ♗xg3!? (what else?) 25 ♗xe3 ♗f4 26 ♗xf4 ♖xe2 27 ♗xe2 ±.

We return to 18...♘f6 *(D)*:

W



White now has an important choice to make:

D31: 19 ♖e1	87
D32: 19 ♕g2	88
D33: 19 a4	89

D31)

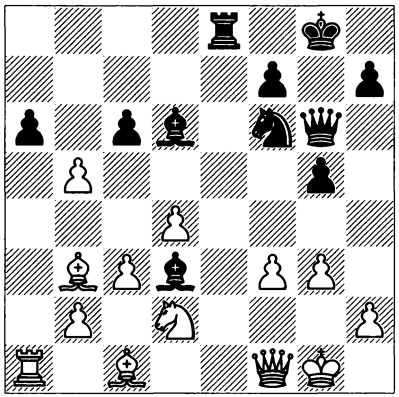
19 ♖e1

This move is not especially promising, but as Kramnik (in)famously chose it in his world championship match with Leko, we shall give it detailed coverage.

19...♖ae8 20 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 21 a4 ♕g6! 22 axb5

White can also play 22 ♘e4 ♘xe4 23 fxe4 ♗xe4 24 ♗xg5! (24 axb5? ♗d3! 25 ♗xf7+ ♕xf7 26 ♕xd3 ♖e1+ 27 ♔g2 ♕d5+ 28 ♔h3 ♖g1 29 ♕e2 ♕f5+ 30 g4 ♖xg4! and Black forces mate) 24...bxa4 25 ♗c4 and here Knaak recommends 25...♗d5 26 ♗xd5 cxd5 27 ♕f6 a3 28 ♕xg6+ hxg6 29 bxa3 ♖c8 30 ♗d2 ± while Leko gives 25...♖b8 26 ♖e1 ♗d5 27 ♗xd5 cxd5 28 ♗c1 h5 with counterplay.

22...♗d3 *(D)*



23 ♕f2?

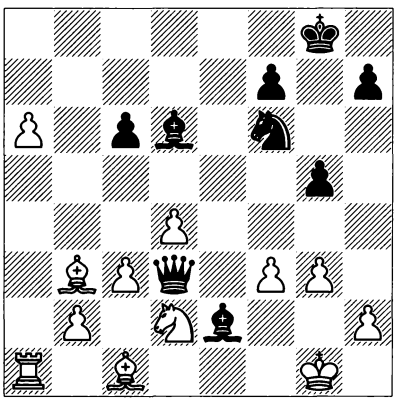
White follows his preparation into the abyss. Instead 23 ♕d1 leads to a draw after 23...♗e2 24 ♕e1 (24 ♗c2? ♕h5 25 ♕e1 ♗xf3 26 ♕f1 ♗d5 27 ♕xf6 ♗xg3! gives Black a winning attack – Leko) 24...♗d3 25 ♕d1 with a repetition.

23...♖e2 24 ♕xe2

Also losing is 24 bxa6 ♖xf2 25 ♔xf2 ♕h6 26 ♔g1 (26 ♔g2 g4) 26...♗xg3 27 hxg3 ♕h3 28 a7 ♕xg3+ 29 ♔h1 g4! 30 a8♕+ ♔g7 with a winning attack.

24...♗xe2 25 bxa6 ♕d3! *(D)*

W



26 ♔f2

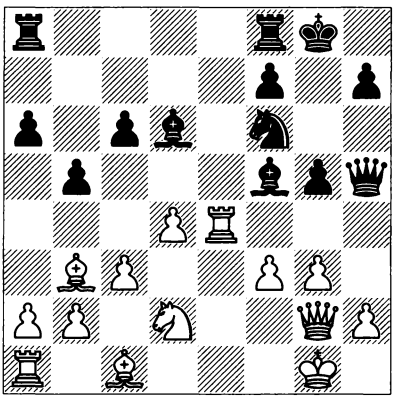
After 26 a7 Black wins with 26...♕e3+ 27 ♔g2 ♗xf3+! 28 ♘xf3 ♕e2+ 29 ♔g1 ♘g4! 30 a8♕+ ♔g7 31 ♕xc6 ♕f2+ 32 ♔h1 ♕f1+ 33 ♘g1 ♘f2#.

26...♗xf3 27 ♘xf3 ♘e4+ 28 ♔e1 ♘xc3 29 bxc3 ♕xc3+ 30 ♔f2 ♕xa1 31 a7 h6 32 h4 g4

0-1 Kramnik-Leko, World Ch match (game 8), Brissago 2004.

D32)

19 ♕g2 *(D)*



19...♕g6

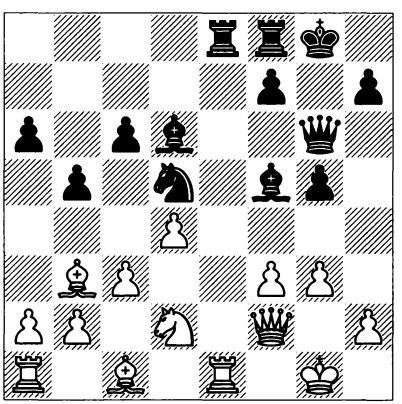
This move is best. 19...♘xe4?! 20 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 21 fxe4 gives White excellent compensation for the exchange, and 19...♗h3?! 20 ♕f2 ♖ae8 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 22 a4 also looks insufficient for Black.

20 ♖e3

After 20 ♖e1 ♖ae8 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 22 ♘f1 Black could try either 22...♗d3 or 22...c5.

20...♖ae8

Grishchuk's move 20...♘d5!? is another idea for Black. After 21 ♖e1 ♖ae8 22 ♕f2 *(D)* (White may investigate 22 ♘e4!? h6 23 ♗d2) Grishchuk had quite a surprise in store.



22...♘f4! 23 gxf4 gxf4+ 24 ♔h1 ♖xe1+ 25 ♕xe1 ♔h8 26 ♕g1 (after 26 ♕f2 ♖g8 intending ...♗h3 Black has a strong attack) 26...♕h5 27 ♕f2 ♖g8 and here:

a) 28 ♗d1?! looks good, but hits a snag: 28...♗h3 29 ♗e2? (29 ♗c2 is complex and might survive) 29...♗e7! 30 ♗d3 ♗h4 31 ♕e2 ♕g5 32 ♕e5+ ♕xe5 33 dxe5 ♗f2 0-1 Shomoev-Grishchuk, Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008.

b) 28 a4? also runs into trouble: 28...♕g6! (28...♗h3 29 ♘e4 ♕g6 30 ♗xf7 ♗g2+ 31 ♔g1 ♕xf7 32 ♘xd6 ♕f6 is unclear – Golubev) 29 h4 ♗e7 30 ♕h2 ♗xh4 31 ♗xf7 ♕xf7 32 ♕xh4 ♕g6 33 ♕h2 ♗h3 –+.

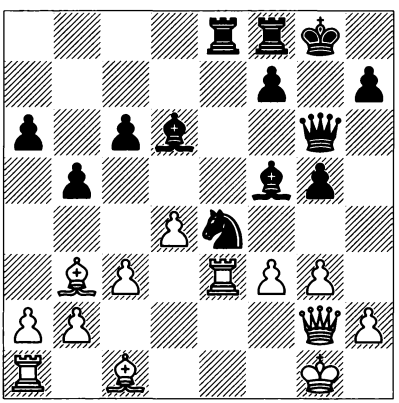
c) 28 ♘e4 is safest. 28...♗xe4 29 fxe4 f3 30 ♗g5 (there is nothing else) 30...♖xg5 31 ♖g1 is about equal.

21 ♘e4

21 ♖xe8 transposes to the note to White's 20th move.

21...♘xe4 *(D)*

Black should avoid 21...♘d5?! 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 24 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 25 ♗xg5 ♕e6 26 g4 ♗d3 27 ♖d1 ♕e1+ 28 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 29 ♔f2 ♖e2+ 30 ♔g3 ♖xg2+ 31 ♔xg2 ± Anand-Aronian, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2007.



22 g4!

This is the point of White's 21st move. Without this resource White would just be worse.

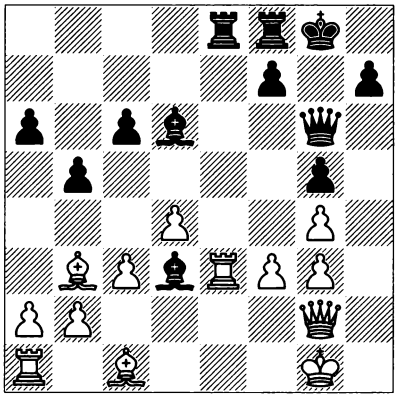
22...♘g3

22...♗xg4 23 fxe4 gives White a strong, mobile centre.

23 hxg3 ♗d3 *(D)*

Previously, Aronian had played 23...♗b1 against Anand with success: 24 ♕e2 ♖xe3 25 ♕xe3 h6 26 ♕e1 ♗c2 27 ♗xc2 ♕xc2 28 ♕e4 ♕d1+ 29 ♔g2 ♔g7 30 ♕e3 ♗xg3! 31 ♔xg3 ♖e8 32 ♕xe8! ½-½ Anand-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2007. However, White can probably improve here, perhaps with 24 a4 b4 25 ♗c4!?.

W



24 ♗d2

24 ♕d2!? is also possible. Black will have to find an improvement on 24...♖xe3 25 ♕xe3 ♗xg3 (25...h6!?) 26 ♕xg5 ♖e8 27 ♗e3 ♕xg5 28 ♗xg5 ♔g7 (28...♖e2 29 ♖d1 intending ♖d2) 29 ♔g2 ♗d6 30 ♖d1 ♖e2+ 31 ♔f1! ♖e5+ 32 ♖xd3 ♖xg5 33 ♖e3 ± Borzenko-Taylor, corr. 2005.

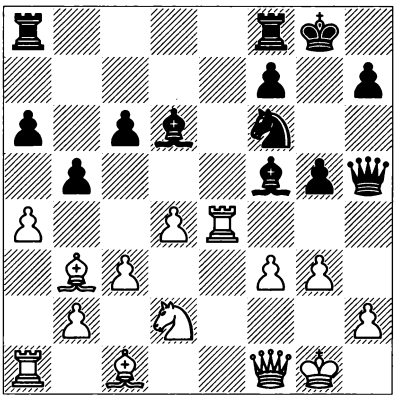
24...♖xe3 25 ♗xe3 ♖e8 26 ♖e1 c5 27 dxc5 ♗xc5 28 ♕d2 ♗xe3+ 29 ♖xe3 ♕b6 30 ♔f2 ♖d8

Svidler-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2007. Black has compensation, as it is difficult for White to untangle his pieces.

D33)

19 a4 *(D)*

B



White looks to open a second front.

19...♘xe4

In practice, Black always captures the rook. 19...♖ae8?! 20 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♖a6 is clearly good for White, but Black could investigate 19...♕g6 20 ♖e1 ♖ae8 with the idea 21 axb5 ♗d3 22 ♕f2 ♖xe1+ 23 ♕xe1 ♖e8.

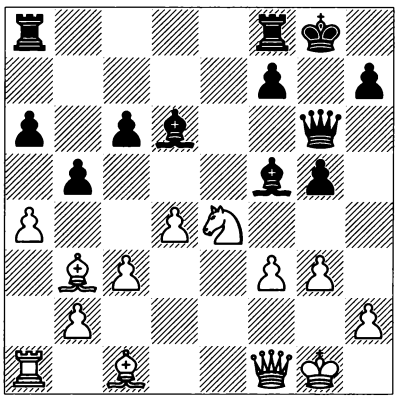
20 ♘xe4

After 20 fxe4?! ♗e6 ∓ White does not have enough for the exchange because Black is well developed and ready to strike back with ...f5.

20...♕g6 *(D)*

Following 20...♗xe4?! 21 fxe4 ♔g7 22 ♗d2 (22 ♕f5!?) 22...f6 23 ♕f5 ♕e2 24 ♗c2! ♖f7 25 e5 ♕xd2, 26 ♕xh7+? allowed Black to survive by 26...♔f8 27 ♕h8+ ♔e7 28 exd6+ ♔xd6 29 ♕xa8 ♕e3+ 30 ♔h1 ♕f3+ 31 ♔g1 ½-½ in Kurnosov-Azarov, European Ch, Kusadasi 2006, but the patient 26 exd6! would have given White a strong attack.

W



21 ♘xd6

Black must also be ready for 21 ♘xg5, which is critical. 21...♖ae8! (Black can also try 21...c5, but White can fight for an advantage with either 22 ♗d5 or 22 ♘e4) 22 ♘e4 (22 axb5 ♗d3 23 ♕d1 axb5 and now 24 ♖a7 is unclear, while White should avoid 24 ♖a6? h6 25 ♘e4 ♗xe4 26 fxe4 ♗xg3! ∓ Harding) 22...♗xe4 23 fxe4 ♖xe4 (not 23...♕xe4? 24 ♗h6 ±) 24 ♗c2 ♖fe8 (24...f5 25 ♗xe4 fxe4, with compensation, was given by Marin but the text-move is more convincing) and now White has:

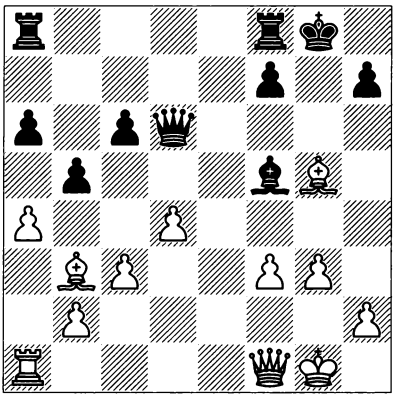
a) 25 ♗d2 ♗xg3 26 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 27 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 28 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ 29 ♔xg2 ♖e2+ 30 ♔f3 ♖xd2 31 axb5 axb5 32 ♖a6 should just be a draw.

b) 25 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 26 ♕f2 (26 ♕f3? ♖e1+ 27 ♔f2 ♖e6 28 ♕d1 ♖f6+! 29 ♔g2 h5 30 ♗d2 h4 31 ♕e1 hxg3 32 hxg3 ♕h5 33 ♕e8+ ♔g7

∓) 26...bxa4!? 27 ♗d2 (27 ♖xa4? loses to 27...♕g4, because of 28 ♕f1 ♗xg3!) 27...h5 28 ♕f3 h4 29 ♗e1 c5 30 ♗f2 cxd4 31 cxd4 hxg3 32 hxg3 ♖f4 33 ♕c3 ♖g4 34 ♔g2 = is one line given by Harding.

21...♕xd6 22 ♗xg5 *(D)*

B



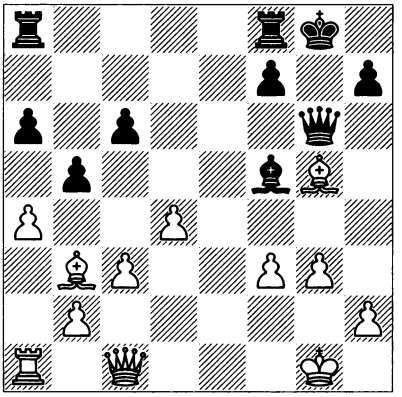
22...♕g6!

This is a strong move, not offering White the chance to demonstrate an improvement on 22...♖fe8 23 ♖e1 ♕g6 24 ♗e7 ♖a7 25 ♗c5 ♖aa8 26 ♗e7 ♖a7 27 ♗c5 ½-½ Shirov-Leko, Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006.

23 ♕c1 *(D)*

After 23 ♗e7 ♖fe8 24 ♖e1 ♗e6 25 ♖xe6!? (25 ♗xe6 ♖xe7 26 ♖e4 ♕h6 is fine for Black) is an interesting idea of Harding's. White sacrifices a second exchange, but his position looks easier to play. He gives 25...fxe6 26 ♗c5 ♖ab8 27 ♕c1 bxa4 28 ♗xa4 ♖ec8 29 ♗c2 ♕h5 30 g4 ♕h4 31 ♕e3 ♖e8 with unclear play.

B



23...♗d3

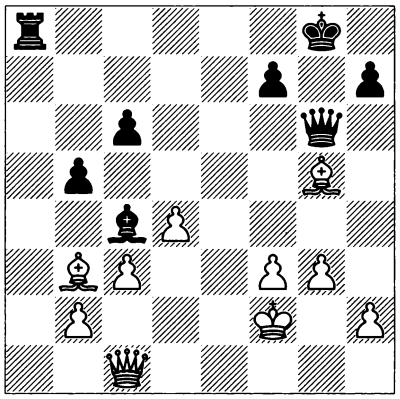
23...♖fe8 24 ♗f4 ♗e6 ½-½ Moura-Harding, corr. 2006-7. Harding gives 25 ♗c2 ♗f5, when 26 ♗b3 ♗e6 repeats. He also gives 26 ♗d1 ♖ad8, although White could still try 27 ♕d2 with an interesting fight ahead.

24 axb5?!

Opening files for Black's rooks looks wrong. After 24 ♗f4 the position is still unclear.

24...axb5 25 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 26 ♔f2 ♗c4 *(D)*

W



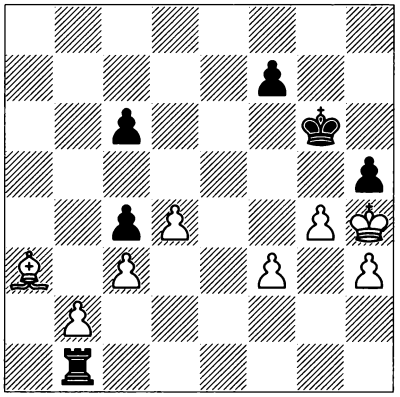
27 ♗xc4

White would rather not play this, but 27 ♗d1 ♕d3 is awful and 27 ♗c2 ♕e6 28 ♗e3 ♕h3 29 ♔g1 ♖a2 30 ♗f2 h6! stops ♕g5+ and threatens ...♖xb2. The rest of the game is a gem so I give it in full.

27...bxc4 28 g4 ♖e8 29 ♗f4 ♕d3 30 ♔g3 ♕e2 31 ♕b1?! ♕e1+ 32 ♕xe1 ♖xe1 33 ♗d6 ♖g1+ 34 ♔f2 ♖b1 35 ♗a3 ♔g7 36 ♔g3 ♔g6 37 h3 h5 38 ♔h4? *(D)*

38 h4 retains drawing chances.

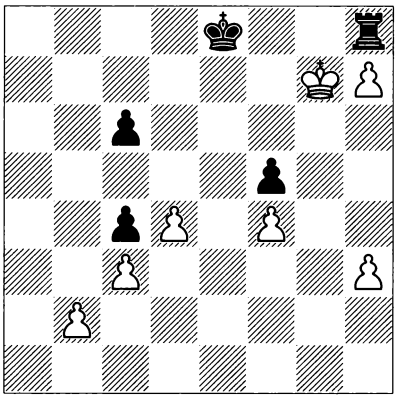
B



38...♖g1! 39 ♗c5 ♖g2 40 ♗a3 f6

Zugzwang.

41 gxh5+ ♔f5 42 f4 ♖g8 43 ♗d6 ♔e6 44 h6?! ♔xd6 45 ♔h5 f5 46 h7 ♖h8 47 ♔g6 ♔e7 48 ♔g7 ♔e8! *(D)*



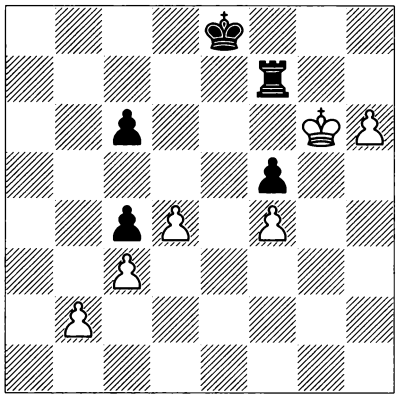
49 ♔g6

49 ♔xh8 ♔f7 puts White in zugzwang. Black will keep moving his king from f7 to f8 until White is forced to push his b-pawn. After Black captures on b3, White's c-pawn will be free to move and Black will quickly queen and mate.

49...♔f8 50 h4 ♔e7 51 ♔g7 ♔e8 52 ♔g6 ♔f8 53 h5 ♔e7 54 ♔g7 ♔e8 55 ♔g6 ♔f8 56 h6 ♔e8 57 ♔f6

57 ♔g7 ♔e7 58 ♔g6 ♔f8 does not help White.

57...♖xh7 58 ♔g6 ♖f7! *(D)*



After 59 h7 ♖f8 60 ♔g7 ♖h8! 61 ♔g6 (61 ♔xh8 ♔f7 is the pseudo-stalemate trick again) 61...♔f8 62 ♔h6 ♔f7 Black wins easily.

0-1 Shirov-Aronian, Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006.

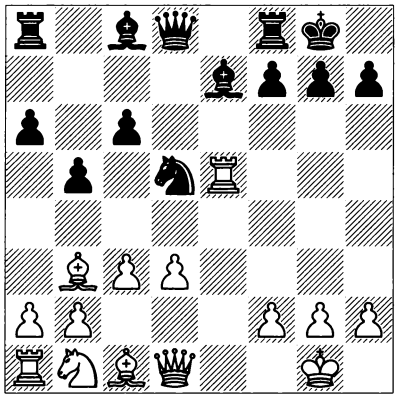
Conclusions

The Modern Variation leads to some of the most unusual and interesting positions in the Marshall Attack. Both sides have unique tactical and positional problems to solve. 16 ♕e2 is not considered dangerous following Anand's discovery of 18...f4!. The most popular move, 16 ♕f3, leads to interesting play in both of its main lines and Black has his share of the play. The most topical move, 16 ♕f1, can be met by heading into an unclear endgame with 16...♕xf1+ or with the more ambitious 16...♕h5, which leads to a very delicate middlegame, with 16...♕h6 a rare but interesting alternative.

Part 2: Other Lines after 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6

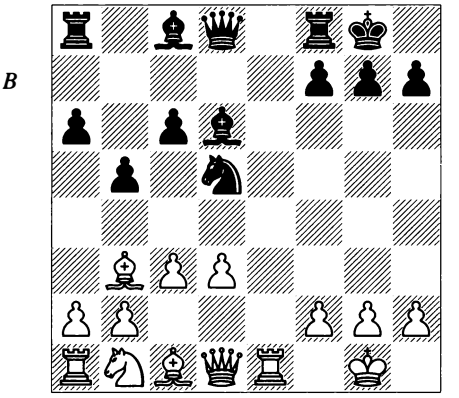
5 Refined Rook-Lift: 12 d3

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d3 *(D)*



This is a more modest-looking continuation than 12 d4. At first glance it does not seem like this should be dangerous for Black, but White maintains control over the e4- and c4-squares, which allows for some tactical possibilities. White has not grabbed as much space, however, and the pawn on d3 may become vulnerable itself. White will often be more than willing to offer this pawn in order to fight for the initiative. It will all come down to the specifics of each position. Despite the similar appearance at first glance of this position to those we have already seen, the play is surprisingly different from that in the first four chapters.

12...♗d6 13 ♖e1 *(D)*

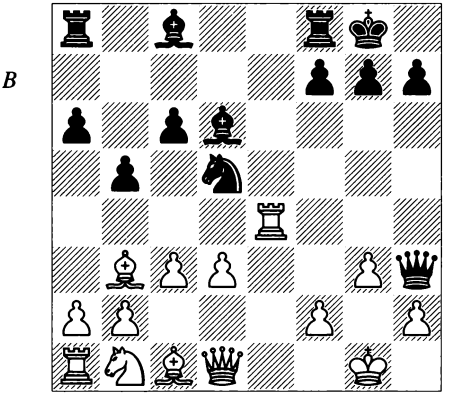


Now Black faces an important decision. In this chapter we look at the most natural move, the direct 13...♕h4, while the next chapter considers the modern preference, 13...♗f5.

13...♕h4

Black continues as he does in the first few chapters. However, White can exploit a tactical detail that was not available to him in Chapter 4.

14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♖e4 *(D)*



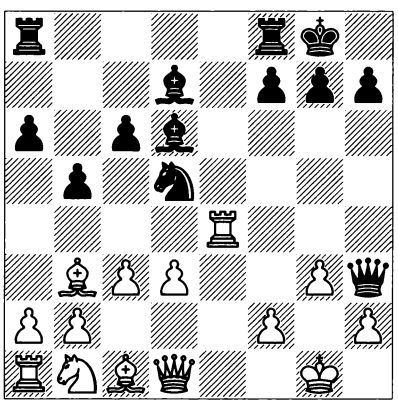
This move is the point of White's play. He intends ♖h4 often with ♘d2-e4 to follow. Compared to the previous chapter, 15...g5 is not possible, because after 16 ♗xg5 ♕f5 the e4-rook is protected and White will remain two pawns up. Therefore Black must find another way to create counterplay. There are four main continuations:

A: 15...♗d7 93
B: 15...♘f6 94
C: 15...♕d7 96
D: 15...♕f5 99

15...♗b7 could also be played, although after 16 ♘d2 Black should probably play 16...♕d7, transposing to Line C. Instead, 16...♖ae8?! 17 ♖h4!? (less ambitious is 17 ♕f1 ♕d7 18 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 19 ♘e4 c5 20 ♗d2 ♗f8, as in Leko-Adams, Belgrade 1995, when Adams gives 21 f3 f5 22 ♘f2 ±) 17...♕d7 18 ♘e4 ♗e7 19 ♗g5 f6 20 ♕h5! (or even 20 ♗e3 f5 21 ♘c5 ♕c8 22 ♘xb7 ♕xb7 23 ♖d4 ♔h8 24 ♗xd5 cxd5 25 ♕f3 ± Timoshenko-Fang, Vienna 1998) 20...fxg5 21 ♕xh7+ ♔f7 was A.Ivanov-Fang, Lowell 1993, and now 22 ♗d1! gives White a winning attack.

A)

15...♗d7 *(D)*



This move was tried a couple of times by Kamsky. Black just gets on with his development.

16 ♘d2

Surprisingly, the consistent 16 ♖h4 is untried, although after 16...♕f5 White can still continue with 17 ♘d2, because 17...♕xd3? loses to 18 ♗c2 – a typical idea in the 12 d3 variation. 17...♖ae8 is better, with the idea 18 ♘e4 ♗e7 to pester White's rook. This is another common theme.

16...g5

16...♖ae8 is less explored, but it is probably just as good (or bad!) as the main continuation.

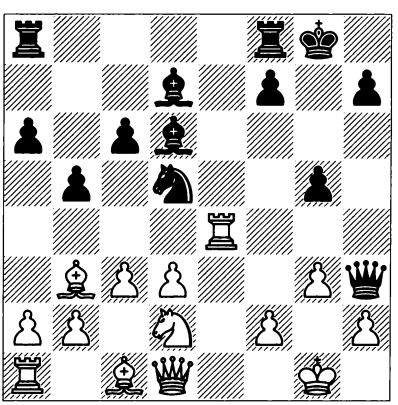
a) If White continues aggressively with 17 ♖h4 Black gets good play after 17...♕f5:

a1) 18 ♘e4 ♗e7 19 ♖h5 ♕g6 20 ♖e5 f6! (20...f5 21 ♘d2 f4 22 ♘e4 ♔h8 23 ♕h5 is better for White according to Lalić) 21 ♗xd5+ (21 ♖xd5 cxd5 22 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 intending ...f5 favours Black) 21...cxd5 22 ♖xd5 ♗c6 23 ♖d4 f5 24 ♘d2 ♗c5 25 ♖f4 (it may be better to sacrifice the exchange with 25 ♘b3, although Black is not worse) 25...♕e6 gives Black a strong initiative.

a2) 18 ♘f1 ♕g6 19 ♗d2 (19 ♕f3 ♖e1 20 ♖e4 ♖e8 21 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 gives Black good compensation, and the greedy 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♕xd5? ♗f8! intending ...♗c6 gives Black a crushing initiative) 19...♗f5 (or 19...♗e7 20 ♖e4 ♗f5 21 ♖e5 ♗xd3 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♘e3 ♗d6 24 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 25 ♘xd5 ♖e2 26 ♗f4 ♕e4! with compensation – Lalić) 20 ♗xd5 (20 d4 ♗e7 traps the rook) 20...cxd5 21 ♘e3 and Black has compensation after either 21...♗xd3 22 ♘xd5 ♗e2 or 21...♗e6 (Murei-Geller, Amsterdam 1987).

b) White should probably prefer 17 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 18 ♘e4 ♗c7 19 ♗d2 intending ♕f1, when Black still has to prove he has enough for the pawn.

We now return to the position after 16...g5 *(D)*:



17 ♖e2

This prophylactic move has been White's most popular choice. Other moves such as 17 ♕f1 and 17 a4 are also possible, while practice has seen 17 ♘f3 h6, and here:

a) 18 ♖d4 tries to quell Black's play with an exchange sacrifice. 18...♗c5 19 ♖xd5 cxd5 20 ♗xd5 ♖ad8 21 d4 was Mukhutdinov-Berzinsh, Naberezhnye Chelny 1993. Now Lalić gives 21...♗g4! with the idea 22 dxc5 ♗e6.

b) 18 ♘e5 is critical. 18...♗f5 (18...♗xe5 19 ♖xe5 ±) and now:

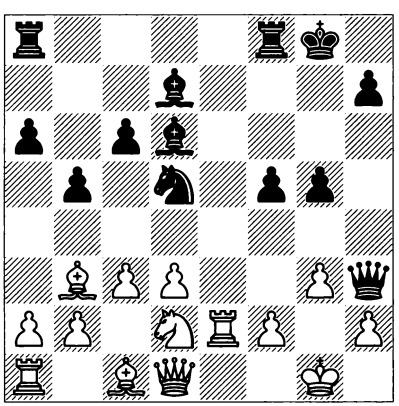
b1) 19 ♘g4 can be met by 19...♗xg4! (worse is 19...♗f4?! 20 ♘xh6+ ♕xh6 21 gxf4 ♗xe4 22 fxg5 ♕g6 23 dxe4 ♕xe4 24 ♗c2 ♕h4 25 ♕f3 ♖fe8 26 ♗d2 ± Lalić) 20 ♖xg4 (20 ♕xg4 ♕xg4 21 ♖xg4 ♘f6 22 ♖d4 ♗c5 also traps the rook) 20...♘f6 21 ♖e4 ♘xe4 22 dxe4 ♗e5, when White has compensation for the exchange but I do not think Black is worse.

b2) 19 ♘xc6! was queried by Ivanchuk in his *Informator* notes, but Lalić points out that it is not bad at all. 19...♘f6 (with an attack – Ivanchuk) 20 ♕f3! ♗xe4 21 dxe4 ♘g4 22 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ 23 ♔xg2 ♖fe8 24 f3 gives White the better chances with two pawns for the exchange in the ending.

17...f5?! *(D)*

This is consistent, but it just looks bad. Instead 17...♕h5 18 ♖e1! ± is given by Ivanchuk.

W



18 c4!

18 ♘e4?! is a thematic idea, but 18...fxe4 19 dxe4 ♗g4 20 exd5 c5! 21 ♕f1 ♕h5! gives Black a strong initiative for the pawns. 22 ♖e3 (or: 22 ♖d2 ♗xg3! 23 hxg3 ♗f3; 22 ♖e1 c4 23 ♗c2 ♗xg3!) 22...c4 23 ♗c2 ♗c5 24 ♗d2 ♗xe3 (24...♖ad8 and 24...♖f6 are also good) 25 ♗xe3 ♖ae8 26 ♖e1 ♗f3 27 d6 ♗c6 28 ♕e2 ♕h3 29 ♕f1 ♕e6 30 ♗d1 ♕d5 31 f3 ♕xd6 ∓ Anand-Kamsky, Dortmund 1992.

18...f4

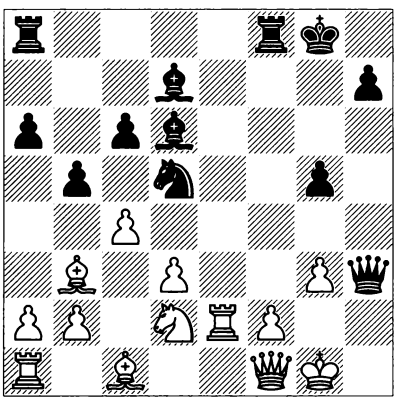
18...bxc4 19 dxc4 f4 20 ♕f1! +– wins for White (but not 20 cxd5? fxg3 21 hxg3 ♖xf2! 22 ♖xf2 ♕xg3+ 23 ♖g2 ♕e3+ 24 ♖f2 ♕g3+ with a draw).

19 ♕f1!

19 cxd5? fxg3 20 hxg3 (after 20 fxg3 ♗c5+ 21 ♔h1 ♗g4 Black has the initiative – Anand) 20...♖xf2! again leads to a draw.

19...fxg3 20 hxg3 *(D)*

B



20...♕h5

20...♘f4 should also fail against accurate defence. 21 c5+ ♔h8 22 cxd6 ♕h5 23 gxf4 ♗h3 24 ♕xh3 ♕xh3 25 ♖e3 ♕h4 26 ♖g3 gxf4 27 ♘f3 ♕f6 28 ♖g2 ± is one line given by Ivanchuk.

21 cxd5 ♗g4 22 dxc6+ ♔g7 23 ♖e4

This was Ivanchuk-Kamsky, Tilburg 1992. White is winning.

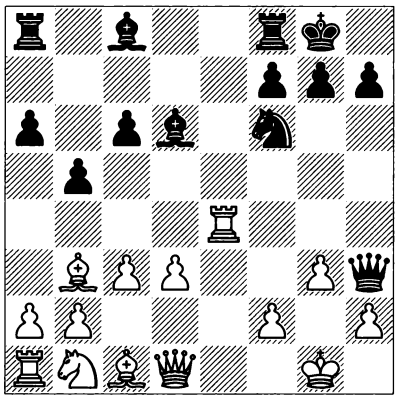
B)

15...♘f6 *(D)*

This move also looks a little doubtful. The main line sees White sacrificing an exchange for tremendous compensation. If Black wants to make 15...♘f6 playable, probably it will have to be with the positional play within the notes rather than by following the main line.

16 ♖h4 ♕f5 17 ♘d2

This developing move is best, because Black cannot play 17...♕xd3? 18 ♖d4. Other moves



have also been tried, but they look less dangerous:

a) 17 ♗f4 ♗e7! leaves the h4-rook feeling rather uncomfortable. After 18 ♗c2 ♕g6 19 d4 ♗f5 20 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 21 ♗e5 ♘d5 22 g4 ♕g6 23 ♖h3 f6 24 ♗g3 f5 25 gxf5 ♖xf5 Black had more than enough for the pawn in Ragger-Beliavsky, Graz 2008.

b) 17 d4 ♕g6!? 18 ♗c2 ♗f5 19 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 (the exchange of light-squared bishops combined with the awkward position of the h4-rook usually leaves Black with sufficient compensation for the pawn) 20 ♗e3 (20 ♗f4 ♗e7! transposes to line 'a' above) 20...♖ae8 21 ♘d2 ♘d5 22 ♘f1 and now 22...f6?! 23 a4 g5 24 ♖h5 ♕d7 25 axb5 axb5 26 ♗d2! ♔g7 (Z.Almasi-Lukacs, Austrian Team Ch 1996/7) 27 ♘e3 gives White a huge advantage. Almasi proposes 22...♕g6! 23 ♕h5 ♕xh5 24 ♖xh5 f5, and 22...♗e7!? 23 ♖h5 ♕d7 also looks quite playable for Black.

c) 17 ♗c2 ♕g6 18 ♘d2 (18 d4 is line 'b') 18...♗g4 19 ♘f3 (19 f3 ♗f5 20 ♘e4 can be met by either 20...♗e7 21 ♗g5 ♖ae8 22 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 23 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 with compensation, or 20...♖ad8 21 d4 ♖fe8 22 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 23 ♗e4 h6 again with compensation, as in Y.Geller-Naiditsch, Moscow 2008) 19...♖fe8 20 ♔g2 ♘d5 21 d4 ♗f5 22 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 with compensation, Leko-Adams, Madrid 1998.

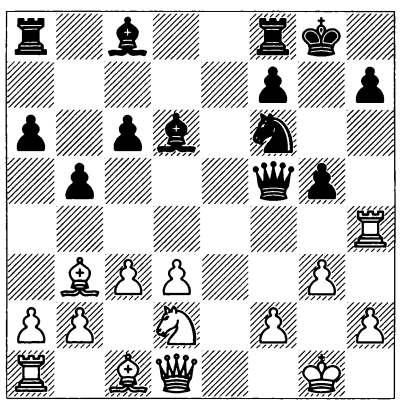
17...g5

As mentioned above, 17...♕xd3? loses to 18 ♖d4, but Black has tried a couple of less radical ideas:

a) 17...♖e8 is natural, but Polgar found a way to seize the initiative by returning the pawn immediately: 18 ♘e4 ♘xe4 19 ♖xe4 (19 dxe4!? is also possible because 19...♖xe4? loses to 20 ♕xd6, and Polgar gives 19...♕g6 20 ♗c2 ♗e7 21 ♖f4 as unclear) 19...♖xe4 20 dxe4 ♕xe4 21 ♗c2! (not 21 ♕xd6?? ♗h3) 21...♕e7 22 ♗g5 f6 23 ♗e3 ♗e6 24 ♕f3 ♕d7 25 ♖d1 ♖d8 26 ♗e4 with strong pressure for White. 26...♗xa2 27 ♗b6 ♗b3 28 ♖d4! c5 29 ♗xc5 ♕e6 30 c4 1-0 was the abrupt finish of J.Polgar-Svidler, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

b) 17...♘g4 could use further tests. 18 f3 (18 ♘e4 ♗e7 19 f3 ♘e5 20 ♖f4 ♕d7 21 ♘f2 c5 22 ♖e4 ♘g6 gave Black some compensation in Yakovenko-Smikovsky, Russian Team Ch, Omsk 2001) 18...♘e3!? (18...♘e5?! 19 d4 ♘g6 20 ♗c2 ±) 19 ♕e2 ♘d5 20 c4 ♘c7 21 d4 ♕g6 22 ♕e4 ♗e6 23 ♕xg6 hxg6 24 c5 ♗e7 25 ♖e4 ♖fd8 gave Black counterplay against White's d-pawn in Smeets-Hebden, European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008. White may improve here somewhere but at least Black has some counterplay, whereas in the main line Black's kingside is weak and the situation looks rather grim.

We now return to 17...g5 *(D)*:



18 ♖h6!

This aggressive move looks funny, but it is clearly the strongest. Instead 18 ♘e4 gxh4 19 ♘xd6 ♕g6 intending ...♗g4 gives Black good counterplay according to Lalić, while Ivanchuk's creative 18 ♖d4 is probably too risky after 18...♗c5 19 ♘f3 h6! 20 ♗f4?! (trying to exchange bishops on d6 through tactical means, but 20 h4 is unclear at least, and a better try) and here:

a) 20...gxf4?! 21 ♖xf4 ♕g6 22 ♘e5 ♕g7 23 ♕f3! ♗d6 24 ♖xf6 ♗xe5 25 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 26 ♕xc6 ♖b8 27 ♕e8+ ♔h7 28 ♕xf7, with four

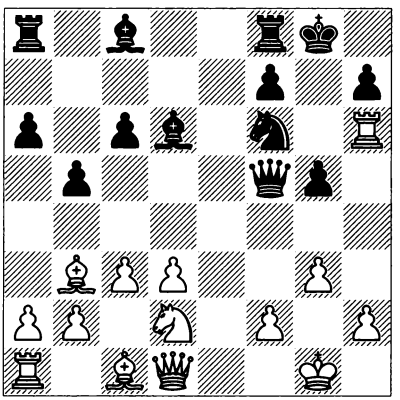
pawns for a piece, is the point of White's odd bishop move.

b) 20...♗b7 21 ♗d6 ♗xd6 22 ♖xd6 c5 23 ♘d2?! (23 ♘e1 is better, but after 23...♖ae8 Black still has a strong initiative) 23...♖ad8 24 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 25 ♗c2 ♘g4 26 ♕e2 c4 ∓ Ivanchuk-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

c) 20...♖e8! 21 ♗d6 ♗a7 intending ...c5 and ...♗b7 gives Black more than enough for the pawn.

We now return to the position after 18 ♖h6 *(D)*:

B



18...♘g4

Black attacks the rook and threatens to play 19...♕xf2+.

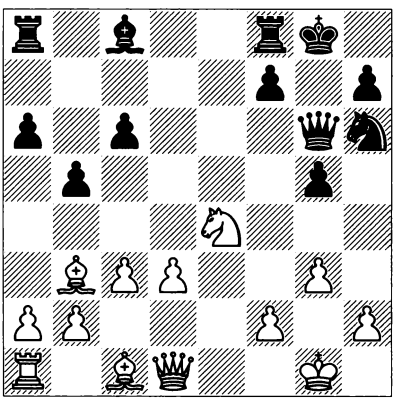
19 ♘e4

This defends the f2-pawn and attacks the d6-bishop.

19...♘xh6 20 ♘xd6 ♕g6 21 ♘e4! *(D)*

After 21 ♕d2 ♕xd6 22 ♕xg5+ ♕g6 23 ♕xg6+ hxg6 24 ♗xh6 ♖e8 Black was fine in Leko-Grishchuk, Dubai rapid 2002.

B



White has scored very well here. The g-pawn is falling and White will have the bishop-pair, a safer king and two pawns for exchange. Some examples:

a) 21...g4 22 ♗g5 ♗f5 23 ♕d2 ± gives White a bind.

b) 21...♗f5 22 ♘xg5 ♗xd3 23 ♘f3! ♗c4 24 ♘e5 ♕e6 25 ♗xh6 ♕xh6 26 ♘xc4 bxc4 27 ♗xc4 ± gives White two pawns for the exchange. Black's pawns are weak and his king position is uncomfortable.

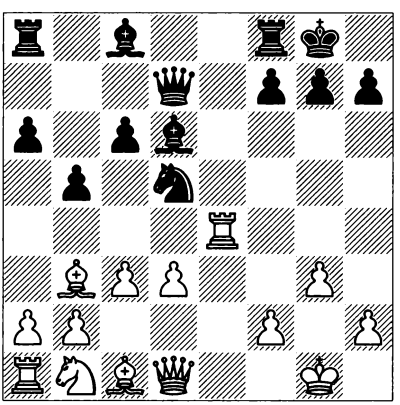
c) 21...♗g4 22 ♕d2 ♘f5 23 ♕xg5 ♗f3 24 ♕f4 ♗xe4 25 dxe4 ♘g7 26 ♗e3 ± was miserable for Black in Anand-Shirov, Mainz rapid 2004.

d) 21...♘g4 22 ♗xg5 ♗f5 23 ♗f4 ♖ad8 24 ♕e2 ♖fe8 25 ♖e1 ♔g7 (25...♘e5? loses to 26 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 27 ♘f6+, while 25...♗xe4 26 dxe4 ♘f6 intending ...♘d5 may be met by 27 ♗c2 ♘d5 28 ♗c1 ±) 26 f3 ♘e5 27 ♗c2 c5 28 ♕e3! f6 29 ♔h1 ♗xe4?! (this gives White a huge centre, so shedding another pawn with 29...c4 30 d4 ♘d3 31 ♗xd3 cxd3 32 ♕xd3 ♖e7 was a better chance of getting some counterplay) 30 fxe4 ♘d7 31 d4 cxd4 32 cxd4 ± Svidler-Adams, Elista Olympiad 1998.

C)

15...♕d7 *(D)*

W



This voluntary retreat is a bit comical if one considers that it can also arise from the move-order 12 ♖e1 ♗d6 13 g3 ♕d7 14 d3 ♕h3 15 ♖e4 ♕d7. As Nunn points out, it is as if Black is claiming that White has nothing better than 16 ♖e1, and indeed 16...♕h3 would repeat the

position. Nevertheless, 15...♕d7 is not so bad and White must play carefully to get anything at all.

16 ♘d2 ♗b7

Black wants to play ...c5, when he hopes that the pressure on White's kingside will offer him sufficient play. The direct 16...f5?! looks insufficient after 17 ♖e1 ♔h8 (17...f4 18 ♕h5! ♔h8 19 ♘e4 ± gives White the initiative in addition to the extra pawn), and here:

a) After 18 f4, 18...♕a7+ 19 d4 was played in Liang Jinrong-Peng Xiaomin, Chinese Ch 1992, but this looks like a poor version of the main lines with 12 d4 for Black. Therefore he should prefer 18...♗b7 or even 18...♖e8 19 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 intending a standard manoeuvre, ...♖a7!.

b) 18 ♕h5 is more enterprising. 18...♘f6 19 ♕h3! (19 ♕h4?! c5 20 ♘f3 ♗b7 21 ♘g5 h6 22 ♗d2? ♕c6 23 f3, Benjamin-Kamsky, USA Ch, Los Angeles 1991, and now 23...♘h7! wins) 19...c5 20 ♘f3 and now:

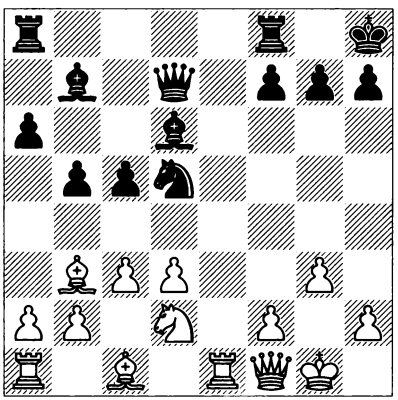
b1) 20...♗b7?! 21 ♘h4! ♘h5 was played in Kotronias-I.Sokolov, Caleta 2009. Here Mikhalevski recommends 22 ♗d2! with the idea ♗d1.

b2) Mikhalevski proposes 20...♕c6! 21 ♘g5 (21 ♘h4 c4! 22 ♗d1 f4! 23 g4 ♖e8 24 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 25 ♗d2 ♖a7! with counterplay) 21...♗b7 22 f3 c4 23 dxc4 bxc4 24 ♗c2 ♖ae8 25 ♖xe8 ♕xe8 26 ♔f1 h6 27 ♗xf5 ♘h5! and Black has a very active position.

17 ♖e1

17 ♘f3 commits the knight rather early and 17...c5 gives Black good compensation.

17 ♕f1 c5 18 ♖e1 ♔h8 *(D)* also gives Black good play:



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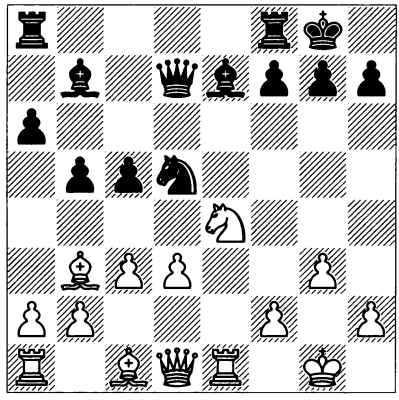
a) 19 ♗d1 f5 (19...♖ae8!?) 20 ♗f3 f4 21 g4 (21 ♕g2 ♖ae8 22 ♖xe8 ♕xe8 23 ♘e4 looks more challenging) 21...♖ae8 was rather unclear in Leko-Adams, Tilburg 1997, although Black looks to have reasonable play.

b) 19 ♘e4 ♗e7 20 a4 h6 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 23 f3 f5 24 ♘f2 was Polaczek-Sirota, corr. 2000. Here 24...b4!? gives Black counterplay.

c) 19 a4 ♘f4! (19...f5? 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 22 ♗d1 g5 23 ♘f3 g4 24 ♘e5 ♕b7 25 f3 ± Ivanchuk-I.Sokolov, Amsterdam 1996) 20 ♘e4?! (after 20 f3 Black can choose between 20...c4 and 20...♘xd3 21 ♕xd3 c4, in both cases with unclear play) 20...♘h3+ 21 ♔h1 was Z.Almasi-Khalifman, Ubeda 1997. Now the most accurate sequence is 21...♘xf2+! 22 ♕xf2 f5 23 ♕g2 c4! 24 ♗c2 cxd3 25 ♗xd3 fxe4 26 ♗xe4 ♖ae8, when 27 ♗d2? ♖xe4 28 ♖xe4 ♗c5 29 ♗f4 fails to 29...♖f7! intending ...♖e7.

17...c5 18 ♘e4 ♗e7 *(D)*



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Black has a very nice-looking position, but he remains a pawn down. Now the passive 19 f3 ♔h8 20 ♗d2 (20 d4 c4 21 ♗c2 ♖ae8 22 ♘g5 is rather strange and after 22...h6 23 ♘e4 f5 24 ♘f2 f4 Black had good play in Simmelink-Bennedik, corr. 1998) 20...f5 21 ♘f2 f4 22 ♘e4 fxg3 23 hxg3 ♕h3 24 ♕e2 c4! 25 ♗c2 (25 dxc4 ♘xc3! 26 bxc3 ♗xe4 intending ...♗c5+) 25...cxd3 26 ♗xd3 ♖ad8 27 ♕f1 ♕h5 28 g4 ♕h4 29 ♖ad1 ♘f4 30 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 gave Black a strong initiative in Leko-I.Sokolov, Groningen 1995, so White usually chooses between:

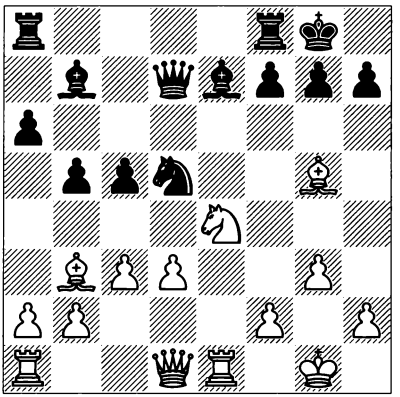
C1: 19 ♗g5 98
C2: 19 a4 99

These moves are closely related because 19 a4 is invariably met by 19...b4 20 ♗g5, but there are some interesting differences.

C1)

19 ♗g5 *(D)*

B



19...f6

19...♗xg5? is bad: 20 ♘xc5! ♕c7 21 ♘xb7 ♕xb7 (21...♘f6 22 ♕f3 ♖ab8 23 ♕f5! ♗h6 24 ♘c5 +–) 22 ♕f3! (worse is 22 ♖e5?! ♘xc3 23 bxc3 ♗f6 24 ♖c5 ♖ac8 with compensation) 22...♖ad8 23 ♖e5 wins back the piece and leaves White two pawns up.

20 ♗d2

20 ♗e3 has been played too, but the bishop is more vulnerable here, not just to the d5-knight but also to ...f5-f4.

20...♔h8 21 ♕h5

White has tried other moves as well:

a) 21 c4 gave Black excellent play after 21...♘b4 22 ♗xb4 cxb4 23 cxb5 f5 24 ♘d2 axb5 25 ♖e6 ♗f6 26 ♘f3 f4 ∓ in Svidler-I.Sokolov, Groningen 1996.

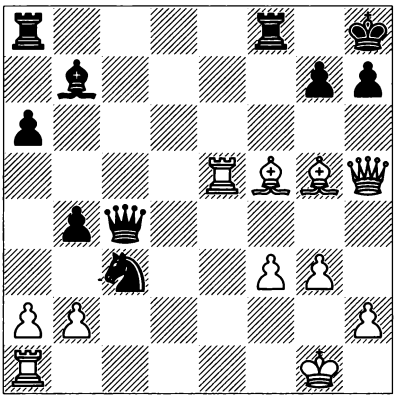
b) 21 d4!? c4 (21...cxd4 22 cxd4 looks insufficient for Black) 22 ♗c2 ♖ae8 (22...f5 23 ♘g5 ♗xg5 24 ♗xg5 ♕c6 is another idea) 23 f3 (White could try for more with 23 ♕h5!?) 23...f5 24 ♘c5 ♗xc5 25 dxc5 ♕c6 (now Black wins back the pawn and has no problems) 26 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 27 ♕f1 ♘f6 28 ♖e1 ♕xc5+ 29 ♕f2 ♖xe1+ 30 ♗xe1 ♕d5 = Acs-Pinter, Hungarian Team Ch 1997/8.

21...f5 22 ♘g5 ♗xg5 23 ♗xg5 ♕c6 24 f3

24 ♕f3 c4 (24...♕d7!? is a possible improvement) 25 dxc4 bxc4 26 ♗c2 and now 26...♕g6 is given by I.Sokolov, but then 27 ♗e7! looks good for White. Black could try to improve with 26...♕b5.

24...c4 25 ♗c2 b4 26 dxc4 ♕xc4 27 ♖e5 ♘xc3! 28 ♗xf5 *(D)*

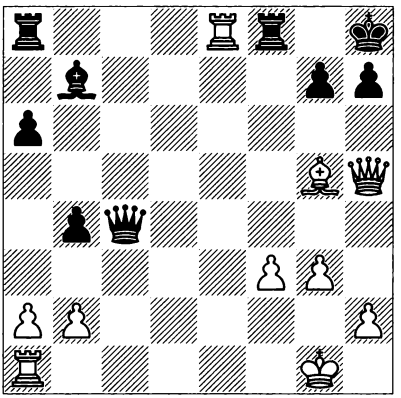
B



This moment has gone by without comment by various annotators, but this is a critical position. 28...♖xf5? 29 ♖xf5 ♘e2+ 30 ♔h1 was Ernst-I.Sokolov, European Team Ch, Debrecen 1992. Here Sokolov gives 30...♔g8 31 b3 ♕e6 32 ♕g4 g6(?) 33 ♖f8+ ♔xf8 34 ♕xe6(??) ♗xf3# but instead 34 ♕xb4+ ♔g8 35 ♕xb7 should win for White. Even 31 ♗h6!? is good because 31...gxh6 32 ♕xh6 ♗xf3+ 33 ♖xf3 ♕d5 34 ♖af1 ♘d4 35 ♕f4 ♘xf3 36 ♕xf3 leaves White a pawn up for nothing. Fortunately, Black has a better move.

28...♘e2+! 29 ♖xe2 ♖xf5 30 ♖e8+ ♖f8 *(D)*

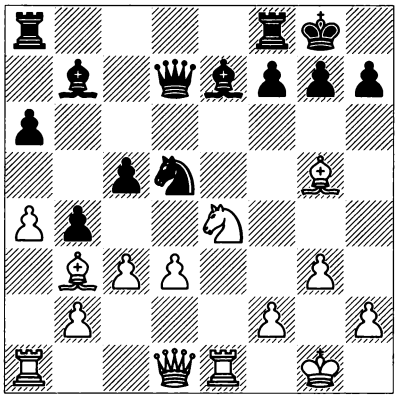
W



White's kingside is weak and the b7-bishop is very strong. Black has excellent compensation for the pawn.

C2)

19 a4 b4 20 ♗g5 *(D)*



Throwing in the queenside pawn moves softens up the queenside a bit (for both sides) and creates some new tactical possibilities.

20...♗xg5

This move failed before, but it works now, as we shall see. Playing by analogy with Line C1 looks worse now, because after 20...f6 21 ♗d2 Black has lost the possibility of playing a timely ...c4.

21 ♘xg5

21 ♘xc5? is wrong now: 21...♕c7! (21...♕c6? is worse as after 22 ♘xb7 neither 22...♕xb7 23 ♕f3 ♖ad8 24 c4 ± nor 22...bxc3 23 ♕f3 cxb2 24 ♖ab1 ♘e7 25 ♕xc6 ♘xc6 26 ♖xb2, with an extra pawn for White, is satisfactory) 22 ♘xb7 ♘f6! 23 ♕f3 ♖ab8 24 ♕f5 ♖xb7 25 ♕xg5 bxc3 ∓. The b-file is opened for Black's rook with great effect – this is the difference between this and the position without a4 and ...b4 thrown in.

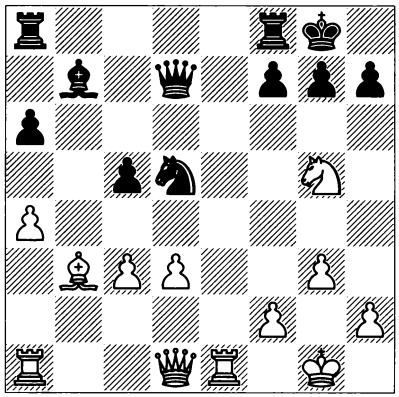
21...bxc3 22 bxc3 *(D)*

22...h6

Black kicks away the knight and creates some *luft* for his king. Other moves:

a) 22...♘xc3 is the first move that comes to mind, but 23 ♕h5 h6 24 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 25 ♗e6, with an attack, is given by Adams. Indeed after 25...♕e7 (25...♕c7 26 ♖a3! corrals the knight and leaves White a good pawn up) 26 ♖ac1 ♘xa4 27 ♖c4! Black has big problems.

b) 22...♕c6 23 ♕f3 ♖ad8 24 d4 (24 ♕e4 and 24 ♖ac1 are also appealing) 24...cxd4 25 cxd4 h6 26 ♘e4 ♗a8 27 ♖ad1 ♕b6 28 ♘c5



♘f6 29 ♕f5 ♖d6 30 ♖e7! led to complications that favoured White in Leko-Slobodjan, FIDE Knockout, Groningen 1997.

c) 22...♖ad8 23 ♘e4 ♕c6 24 ♕h5 ♘xc3 25 ♕xc5 ♖xd3 26 ♗c4 ♕xc5 27 ♘xc5 ♖d4 28 ♗f1! was J.Polgar-Adams, Tilburg 1997. This is identical to the main line, except Black has not even played the useful ...h6 here.

23 ♘e4 ♕c6 24 ♕h5 ♖ad8 25 ♕f5

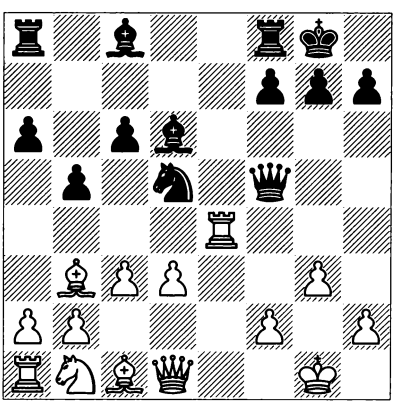
White physically prevents ...f5. Instead, 25 a5?! f5 26 ♘d2 ♔h8 gives Black counterplay, and 27 ♘f3?? ♘f6 0-1 was the sudden finish of Almasi-Adams, European Team Ch, Pula 1997.

25...♘xc3 26 ♕xc5 ♖xd3 27 ♗c4 ♕xc5 28 ♘xc5 ♖d4 29 ♗f1!

White maintains the initiative in the ending, Z.Almasi-Tseshkovsky, Yugoslav Team Ch, Nikšić 1997.

D)

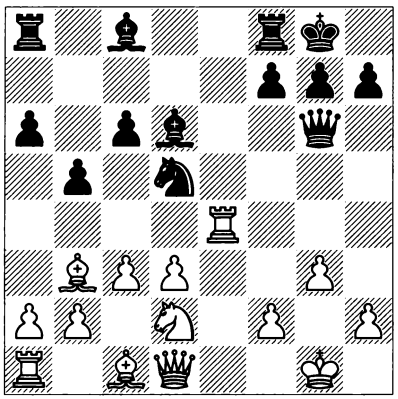
15...♕f5 *(D)*



This is the most popular continuation. Black retreats his queen and intends to develop harmoniously and put pressure on the d3-pawn with ...♕g6 and ...♗f5.

16 ♘d2 ♕g6 *(D)*

As Nunn points out, 16...♘f6 17 ♖e1 ♕xd3 18 ♘e4 ♕xd1 19 ♘xf6+ gxf6 20 ♖xd1 (20 ♗xd1 intending ♗f3 is good too) gives White the better endgame.


W

Now White has:

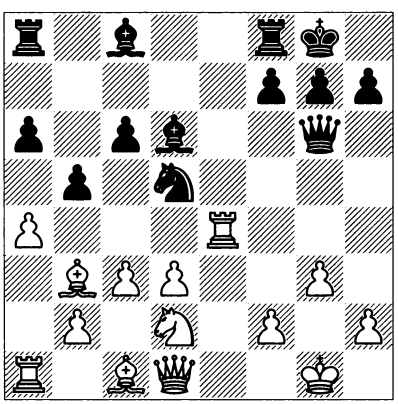
D1: 17 a4	100
D2: 17 ♘f1	101
D3: 17 ♖e1	102

Instead, 17 ♘f3 is well met by 17...♗g4, and 17 c4 ♘f6 leaves White's position looking rather loose.

D1)

17 a4 *(D)*

This is uncommon, but rather dangerous.


B

17...♘f6

Other moves look even worse:

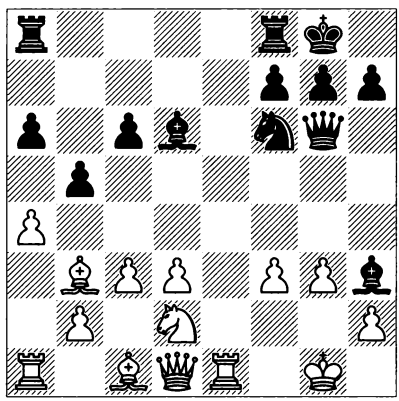
a) 17...♗f5?! 18 axb5! axb5 (18...♗xe4 19 dxe4 ±) 19 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 20 ♖e1 ♗xd3 21 ♘f3! (Zapata) threatens both 22 ♘h4 and 22 ♘d4.

b) 17...f5?! 18 ♖d4! f4 19 ♘e4 ♗g4 20 ♕f1 (not 20 f3?! ♗xf3 21 ♕xf3 fxg3 22 ♕d1? g2, when Black wins after either 23 ♖xd5 cxd5 24 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 25 ♗xa8 ♗xh2+ 26 ♔xh2 ♖f1 or 23 ♗g5 ♖f1+ 0-1 Rudak-Voinov, Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2005) 20...♗e5 21 ♖xd5 cxd5 22 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 23 ♗xa8 fxg3 24 ♘xg3 ♖xa8 25 axb5 +– Zapata-Pavlović, GMA Open, Belgrade 1988.

18 ♖e1 ♗g4

Again, grabbing the pawn with 18...♕xd3? is bad in view of 19 ♗c2 ♕d5 20 ♘e4 ♕xd1 21 ♘xf6+ gxf6 22 ♖xd1 ± with a much better ending.

19 f3 ♗h3 *(D)*


W

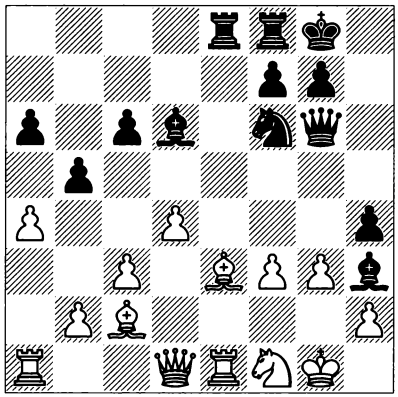
20 ♔h1!?

An interesting prophylactic idea. 20 ♘f1?! is well answered by 20...♖ae8 (Azarov's idea 20...♗xf1?! 21 ♔xf1 ♗xg3? 22 hxg3 ♕xg3 falls short after 23 ♖e3!) 21 ♗e3 h5 22 d4 h4 23 ♗c2 *(D)*, and now:

a) After 23...♗f5 24 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 25 axb5 axb5 26 ♖a6 Nunn gave 26...♕d5 as unclear, while 26...♕c8 intending ...♘d5 also looks OK.

b) 23...♕h5!? 24 ♗f2 (24 g4 ♘xg4! 25 fxg4 ♗xg4 and both 26 ♕d3 ♖e6 and 26 ♕d2 ♗f3 27 h3 f5 give Black an attack) 24...♖xe1 25 ♗xe1 ♗xf1 26 g4 (26 ♔xf1 hxg3 27 hxg3 {27 ♗xg3 ♗xg3 28 hxg3 ♕h1+ gives Black a winning attack} 27...♕h3+ 28 ♔g1 ♗xg3 29

B

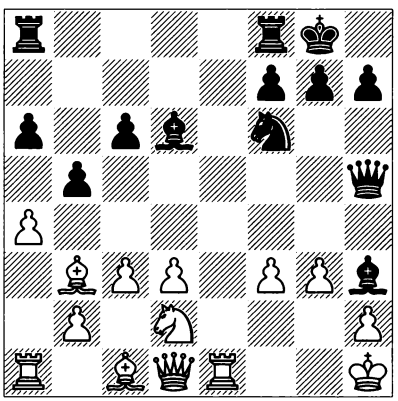


♗xg3 ♕xg3+ 30 ♔h1 ♕h3+ 31 ♔g1 ♖e8 −+) 26...♘xg4 27 fxg4 ♕d5 −+ Zontakh-Pavlovic, Podgorica 1993.

20...♕h5 *(D)*

Instead, 20...♕xd3? 21 ♗c2 ♕d5 22 ♘e4 is a bad ending for Black. Other reasonable moves are difficult to find. For example, the natural 20...♖ae8?! 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 23 ♘e4 gives White a clear advantage.

W



Now:

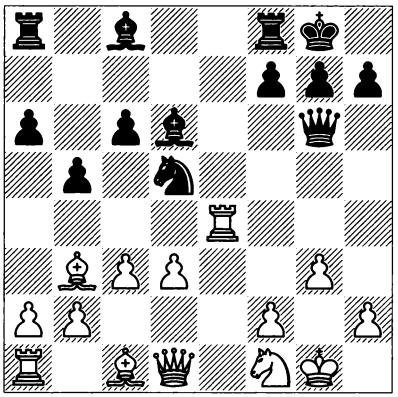
a) 21 ♕e2 ♖ae8 22 ♘e4 ♗xg3! 23 hxg3 ♗e6+ 24 ♔g1 ♘xe4 25 fxe4 ♕xe2 26 ♖xe2 ♗xb3 27 axb5 ½-½ Goloshchapov-Azarov, Cappelle la Grande 2006.

b) Azarov gives 21 axb5 axb5 (21...♘g4?! 22 ♖e2 ♗xg3 23 ♕g1! ♘f2+ 24 ♖xf2 ♗xf2 25 ♕xf2 axb5 26 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 27 ♕g3 ♕f5 28 ♗c2 ±) 22 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 23 ♕e2 ±.

D2)

17 ♘f1 *(D)*

B



17...f5 *(D)*

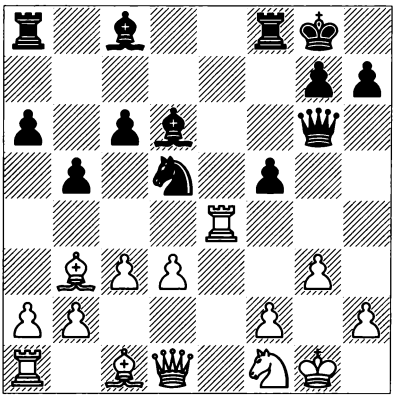
This is probably best. Alternatives:

a) 17...h5 18 a4 ♗g4 19 ♕e1 ♘f6 20 ♖e3 ♖ae8 21 axb5 axb5 22 d4 h4 gave Black some play in A.Kuzmin-Shulman, Minsk 1986, but this does not look trustworthy to me.

b) 17...♘f6 18 ♖e1 ♗g4 19 f3 ♗f5 20 d4 ♖ae8 21 ♗e3 ♘d5 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♕d2 ♗d3 24 ♖ad1 ♗c2 25 ♖c1 ♗d3 26 ♖cd1 ♗c2 27 ♖c1 ♗d3 28 ♗f4 ♗xf4 29 ♕xf4 ♗xf1 30 ♔xf1 ♕d3+ 31 ♔f2 h6 32 ♖cd1 ♕c4 33 a3 is much better for White, Wedberg-Pinter, Haninge 1988.

c) 17...♗f5 is natural but has hardly been played. After 18 ♖d4 ♗c5 19 ♖xd5 cxd5 20 d4 ♗b6 21 ♗xd5 ♖ad8 22 ♕f3 ♗g4 23 ♕g2 ♖fe8 24 ♘e3 ♕d3! Black had good play in D.Hansson-Hebden, Lloyds Bank Masters, London 1984. White could try 18 ♗xd5 cxd5 19 ♖d4 with the idea 20 ♘e3, putting pressure on the d5-pawn.

W



18 ♖d4

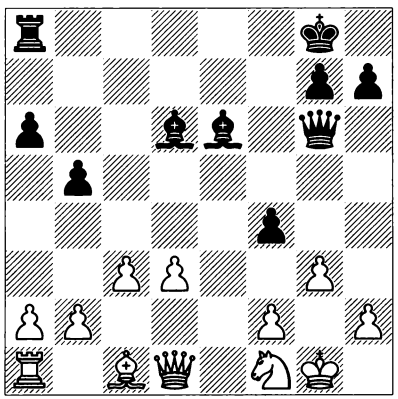
White keeps his rook in the centre to try to fight for the initiative. 18 ♖e1 f4 gives Black good attacking chances.

18...f4

Black should waste no time. 18...♔h8?! allowed White to make a strong exchange sacrifice with 19 ♗xd5 cxd5 20 ♗f4 ♗c5 21 ♖xd5 ♕c6 22 ♖xc5 ♕xc5 23 d4 ± in Nijboer-Van der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1989.

19 ♖xd5 cxd5 20 ♗xd5+ ♗e6 21 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 *(D)*

W



22 ♕f3

After 22 a4 Black could try either 22...b4 or 22...♗g4.

22...♖f8 23 ♕e4 ♗f5 24 ♕d5+ ♔h8 25 a4

This was Timman-Hübner, Tilburg 1985. After 25...♗xd3 26 axb5 ♗e4 27 ♕d4 fxg3 28 ♘xg3 ♗xg3 29 fxg3 axb5 Hübner assesses the position as equal. Both sides must take a little care though, Black because of his pawn deficit and White because his king is a bit loose.

D3)

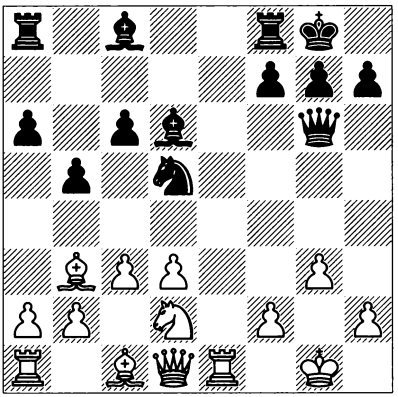
17 ♖e1 *(D)*

17...f5

17...♕xd3? loses to 18 ♗c2, trapping the queen, but 17...♗g4 is an alternative. After 18 f3 Black has:

a) 18...♗h3?! 19 ♘e4 ♖ae8 (19...♗c7 20 ♗e3 ♖ae8 21 ♕d2 was also clearly better for White in Svidler-Adams, FIDE Knockout, Groningen 1997) 20 ♖e2! h5 21 ♗g5 ♗c7 22 ♕d2 ♔h8 23 ♖ae1 f6 24 ♘f2 ♖xe2 25 ♖xe2 ♗f5 26 ♗xd5 cxd5 27 ♗f4! ♗xf4 28 ♕xf4 ♗xd3 29 ♖d2 was played in Anand-Adams, FIDE

B

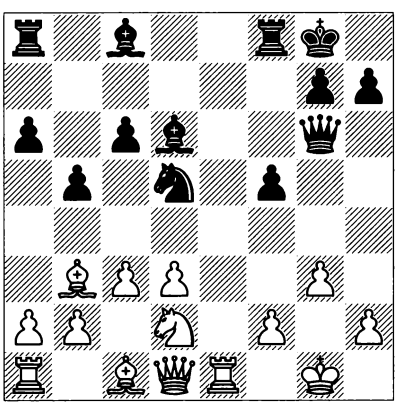


Knockout, Groningen 1997. With ♕d6 coming next, Black's position is critical.

b) 18...♗h5 looks better: 19 ♘e4 ♖ae8 20 ♔g2 (after 20 ♘xd6 ♗xf3! Lalić gives 20 g4 f5 21 ♘xd6 fxg4! ∓) 20...♗c7 (20...♗b8 should be similar, but after 21 ♗d2 f5 22 ♘f2 ♔h8 23 ♗xd5 cxd5 24 d4 f4? {24...♖e4!?} 25 g4 ♗xg4 26 ♘xg4 h5 27 ♕b1 ♕g5 28 h4 ♕xh4 29 ♘h2 White was close to victory in Kr.Georgiev-Bryson, Dubai Olympiad 1986) 21 ♗d2 ♔h8 22 ♘f2 f5 23 ♗xd5 cxd5 24 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 25 d4 ♕e6 26 ♕f1 ♕e2 27 ♕xe2 ♖xe2 28 ♖d1 h6 29 h3 g5 was Mekhitarian-Greenfeld, São Paulo 2008. Black has typical compensation in the ending and the game was soon drawn.

We now return to 17...f5 *(D)*:

W



Black intends ...f4 with an attack. White can block the f-pawn with 18 f4, ignore it with 18 a4, or force matters by 18 c4.

D31: 18 f4 103
D32: 18 a4 104
D33: 18 c4 106

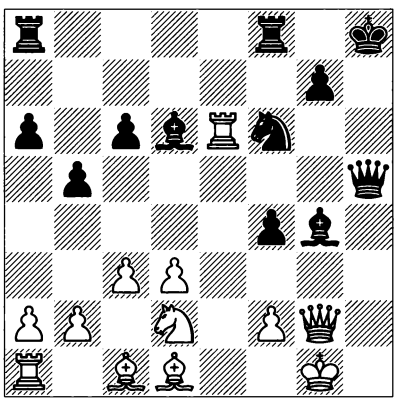
Other moves are less challenging:

a) 18 ♘e4? is bad in view of 18...fxe4 19 dxe4 ♗g4 20 ♕d4?! ♖ae8 21 ♗d2 ♔h8! with the idea 22 exd5 c5 −+. We shall see an improved version of this idea for White in Line D33.

b) 18 ♘f3?! allows Black to develop his initiative very naturally. 18...f4 19 ♘e5 ♗xe5 20 ♖xe5 fxg3 21 hxg3 (21 fxg3 ♗g4 22 ♕c2 ♖ae8 23 ♗f4 ♗e6! gives Black good play) 21...♗g4 22 ♕e1 (22 ♕f1 ♖ae8 23 ♖g5 ♕e6 and now 24 c4?! ♗h3! 25 cxd5 ♕f6! gives Black a strong attack and 24 ♗f4 ♗f3! also leaves Black with a strong initiative) 22...♗f3 23 ♗d2 ♖ae8 was good for Black in Leko-Svidler, Dortmund 1998.

c) 18 ♕f3 ♔h8 19 ♗d1 (too greedy is 19 ♗xd5?! cxd5 20 ♕xd5 ♖b8 intending ...♗b7) 19...f4 20 g4 h5 21 h3 ♘f6 22 ♕g2 (22 ♕xc6?! hxg4 23 ♕xa8 f3 24 h4 gives Black a strong attack after either Adams's 24...g3 or Lalić's 24...♗f5) 22...hxg4 23 hxg4 ♗xg4 24 ♖e6 ♕h5 *(D)* and here:

W



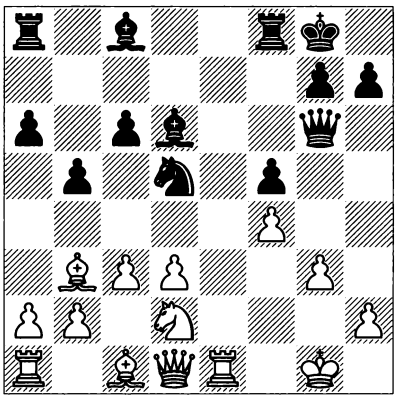
c1) 25 ♖xf6? ♗xd1 26 ♖xd6 ♖ae8 27 ♘e4 ♗f3 28 ♕h2 ♖e5 −+ is given by Adams. After 29 ♕xh5+ (or 29 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 30 ♘g3 ♖h4 and again Black wins) 29...♖xh5 30 ♘g3 fxg3 31 fxg3 ♖h1+ 32 ♔f2 ♖h2+ 33 ♔e3 c5! White gets mated – Lalić.

c2) 25 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 26 ♖xd6 (or 26 ♕h1 ♕xh1+ 27 ♔xh1 ♖f6 28 ♖xf6 ♘xf6 29 f3 intending ♘e4 = Lalić) 26...♖ae8 27 ♘e4 ♘e5 28 f3?! (28 ♗d2 ♘f3+ 29 ♔f1 ♘h2+ 30 ♔g1 ♘f3+ =) 28...♘xf3+ 29 ♔f2 ♘h4 30 ♕h1 g5 gave Black a very strong attack in J.Polgar-Adams, Dos Hermanas 1999.

D31)

18 f4 *(D)*

B



We have seen this blockading idea before, but the situation is different here because Black can capture on f4. At first it seems as if this move is just an oversight, but White hopes that he can use the time Black spends establishing material equality to grab the initiative, mainly by getting a firm grip on the dark squares.

18...♗xf4 19 ♕f3

After 19 ♘f3 Black should avoid retreating with 19...♗c7 20 ♘e5 ♗xe5 21 ♖xe5 ♗e6 22 c4 bxc4 23 dxc4 ♘b6 24 ♗e3 ♖ab8 25 ♕d6 ♗f7 26 ♕xg6 hxg6 27 ♖c5 ± (Lalić) and play either the solid 19...♗xc1 20 ♖xc1 f4 21 ♘e5 ♕h6 22 ♕f3 fxg3 23 ♕xg3, which looks a little better for White, or the speculative 19...♗xg3!? 20 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 21 ♔h1 f4.

19...♗b8!

This retreat looks funny at first but there is a tactical reason that Black has lined up all of his pieces on the back rank.

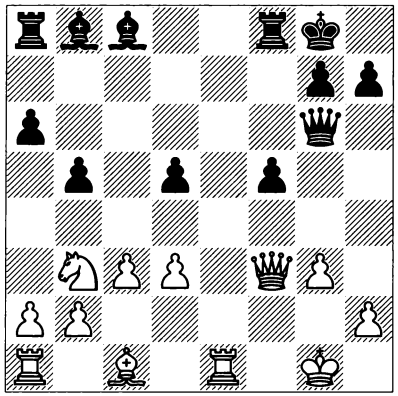
20 ♗xd5+ cxd5 21 ♘b3 *(D)*

This is consistent and clearly best. White wants to play ♗f4. Grabbing material with 21 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 22 ♕xa8? just rebounds after 22...♕b6+ 23 d4 ♗b7 (this is the real point behind 19...♗b8! – the rook is not hanging on f8) 24 ♖e6 ♕c7 ∓. And after 21 ♘f1 ♗b7 22 ♖e7 ♗c6 23 ♕e3 (Popović-Pavlović, Yugoslav Team Ch, Cetinje 1993) Black should play 23...♖f6! intending ...♗d6 ∓ (23...d4 also looks good).

21...♕f7

Also possible is 21...♗b7 22 ♗f4 ♗a7+ (White is much better after 22...♗xf4? 23 ♕xf4

B

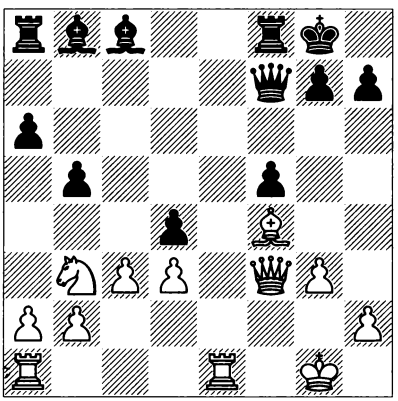


d4 24 ♘xd4 ♖ae8 25 ♖xe8 ♕xe8 26 ♔f2! ± Kotronias-Beliavsky, European Ch, Istanbul 2003) 23 d4 ♖ae8 24 ♕f2 ♖e4 25 ♘d2 and now instead of 25...h6 26 ♘xe4 dxe4 (Am.Rodriguez-L.Perez, Cuban Ch, Matanzas 1998), Black should just play 25...♖ee8, when it is not so clear that he is really any worse. If White tries to get his knight to e5, Black will be able to play ...♖e4 again.

22 ♘d4

After 22 ♗f4 d4! *(D)* White has:

W



a) 23 ♘c5 ♗xf4 24 gxf4 (24 ♕xf4 dxc3 25 bxc3 ♗b7 =) 24...♖a7 25 cxd4 ♗b7 gives Black compensation. If 26 ♕f2, then 26...♗d5 is fine for Black, while 26 ♘xb7 ♖xb7 27 d5 ♖d7 28 ♖e6 ♖fd8 29 ♖ae1 ♖xd5 30 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 31 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 32 ♕xd5+ ♕f7 is level.

b) 23 ♕xa8 gives Black a choice:

b1) 23...♗b7 is sufficient. 24 ♕xb8 ♖xb8 25 ♗xb8 ♕d5 26 ♖e2 ♕f3! 27 ♖d2 (27 ♘xd4 ♕h1+ 28 ♔f2 ♕xa1) 27...♕h1+ 28 ♔f2 ♕xh2+ 29 ♔f1 ♕h1+ with a draw.

b2) 23...♗xf4 attempts to keep some life in the position. 24 ♘xd4 (24 ♕f3 ♗e3+ 25 ♖xe3 ♗b7 26 ♕f4 dxe3 27 ♘c5 ♗a8 with counterplay) 24...♗b7 25 ♕xf8+ ♔xf8 26 ♘e6+ ♔g8 27 ♘xf4 g5 28 ♘e6 ♕h5 29 ♘d4 f4 gives Black sufficient counterplay.

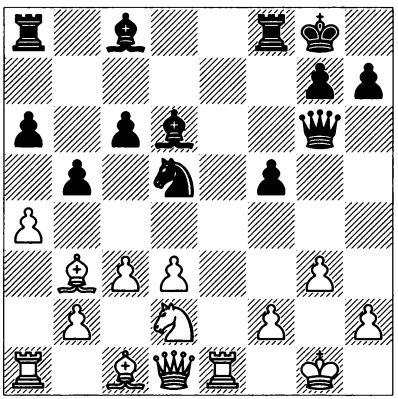
22...♗a7 23 ♗f4 ♗d7 24 ♖e5 b4!? 25 ♖ae1 ♖ae8 26 ♔f1 bxc3

The game was drawn here in Leko-Adams, Linares 1999. After 27 bxc3 ♗xd4 28 cxd4 ♖xe5 the position is equal. If White tries for something with 29 dxe5, then 29...d4! opens a diagonal for Black's queen and bishop, and it is White who should be careful.

D32)

18 a4 *(D)*

B



18...♖b8

Black should take a move in order to secure his queenside because 18...f4 19 ♘e4 is annoying. Opening the a-file should favour White of course, but Black's rook is much less vulnerable to tactical ideas now that it is off the h1-a8 diagonal. Black does have an alternative in 18...♔h8!?, ignoring the threat of axb5. White has:

a) 19 ♗xd5 cxd5 20 axb5 f4 21 ♘f1 looks risky after 21...d4 with the idea ...♗b7.

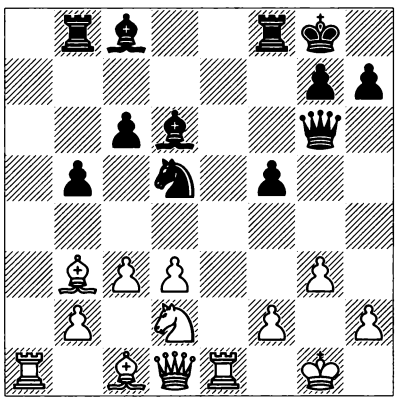
b) 19 ♘f3 f4 20 ♗xd5 (20 ♘e5 ♕f6 21 ♗xd5 fxg3!, as pointed out by Pavlović, gives Black a strong attack) 20...cxd5 21 ♘e5 ♗xe5 22 ♖xe5 fxg3 23 hxg3 ♗g4 gives Black compensation. Pavlović gives the funny line 24 ♕f1 ♖ae8 25 ♗f4 ♖xe5 26 ♗xe5 ♗f3 27 ♕h3 ♕f5 28 ♕xf5 ♖xf5 29 g4 ♖xe5 30 axb5 h5! with a

strong attack, because 31 bxa6 will get White mated after 31...hxg4.

c) 19 axb5 must be critical, when 19...♘f4! is Pavlović's idea – Black continues the attack at all costs. Then 20 ♘c4 ♘h3+ 21 ♔g2 f4 22 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 is critical. 23 f3 (23 ♕f3 ♗d7 24 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 25 bxa6 fxg3 26 ♕xg3 ♖xf2+ 27 ♔h1 ♕f8 28 ♗e3 ♖f3 29 ♕g2 ♖f2 30 a7 ♖xg2 31 ♔xg2 ♕a8 32 ♔g3 c5 gives Black enough play) 23...cxb5 24 g4 ♗xg4! 25 fxg4 ♘g5 26 d4 f3+ 27 ♔h1 ♘h3 28 ♗e3 ♖ae8 29 ♕d2 ♕g6 30 ♗c2 ♕xg4 and Black is not worse – Pavlović. If we continue with the forced sequence 31 ♖g1 ♕h5 32 ♖g3 ♕d5 33 ♖f1 f2+ 34 ♖g2 ♖f3, White must find the desperate resource 35 ♗h6! to have a chance of holding the position.

19 axb5 axb5 *(D)*

W



20 ♘e4!

This idea of Anand's is the point of White's play. Other moves are less testing:

a) 20 c4 f4! gives Black good play: 21 ♘e4 (21 cxd5? fxg3 22 fxg3 ♗xg3 23 ♔h1 ♗g4 24 ♖e6 ♗xe6 25 dxe6 ♖f2! −+ Lalic) 21...fxg3 (21...bxc4 is also possible) 22 fxg3 ♗g4 23 ♕c2 bxc4 24 dxc4 ♘b4 25 ♕d2 ♗e5 26 ♘f2 ♗d1! intending ...♗xg3 is one amusing idea.

b) 20 ♘f3 f4 21 ♘e5 ♗xe5 22 ♖xe5 fxg3 23 fxg3 ♗g4 24 ♕e1 ♗h3 25 ♗e3 (Lalić's suggestion 25 ♖g5 can be met by 25...♖be8! 26 ♕d1 ♕f7, when Black has the initiative; for example, 27 ♗f4 h6 28 ♖h5 ♗e6!) 25...♖f1+ 26 ♕xf1 ♗xf1 27 ♖xf1 ♖f8 28 ♖xf8+ was agreed drawn in Anand-Adams, Dos Hermanas 1999.

c) 20 ♕f3 ♔h8 21 h4 (after 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 ♕xd5 ♗b7 intending ...f4 Black gets a strong attack, while 21 ♕g2 f4 22 ♘f3 fxg3 23 hxg3 b4, utilizing the b8-rook, gave Black counterplay in Copar-Bohak, corr. 1993) 21...h5 22 ♕g2 f4 23 ♘e4 f3 24 ♕f1 ♘f4 25 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 26 ♔h1 ♗h6 27 ♘c5 ♗f5 28 d4 b4 29 ♖e7 bxc3 30 bxc3 ♕g4 31 ♖aa7 ♖fe8 32 ♖ab7 ♖a8 33 ♖a7 ♖ab8 ½-½ Lastin-Smirnov, Russian Ch, Krasnodar 2002 seemed dynamically balanced throughout.

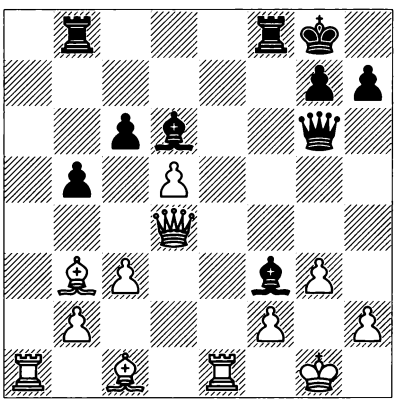
d) 20 ♖a7 ♔h8 (or 20...♗c5 21 ♖c7 ♗b6 22 ♖ce7 f4 23 d4 fxg3 and now both 24 fxg3 ♗g4 and 24 hxg3 ♗g4 leave the position unclear) 21 ♘f3 f4 22 ♘e5 ♗xe5 23 ♖xe5 fxg3 24 hxg3 ♗g4 25 ♕d2?! ♘f4 26 gxf4 ♗f5+ 27 ♔h2 ♕h5+ 28 ♔g2 ♕h3+ 29 ♔g1 ♕g4+ 30 ♔f1 ♕h3+ 31 ♔e1? (funny things can happen in rapidplay; 31 ♔g1 =) 31...♕h1+ 32 ♔e2 ♗g4+ 33 ♔e3 ♖xf4 34 ♖e4 c5 35 ♔xf4 ♕f3+ 36 ♔e5 ♕f6+ 37 ♔d5 ♖d8+ 38 ♔xc5 ♕d6+ 39 ♔xb5 ♖b8+ 40 ♔a4 ♕b6?? (40...♗d7+ is mate after 41 ♖xd7 ♕a6# or 41 ♔a5 ♕b6#) 41 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 42 ♕e3 and White even went on to win in Morozevich-Grishchuk, Dubai rapid 2002!

20...fxe4 21 dxe4 ♗g4 22 ♕d4 ♗f3

22...♖be8 23 ♖a6! causes trouble – this is the point of White throwing in 18 a4.

23 exd5 *(D)*

B



23...c5

Black has invested a second pawn in the attack, but White's b3-bishop is cut off and ...c4 is a possibility, stranding the d5-pawn. Of course, White's kingside is vulnerable too.

24 ♕h4 ♖be8 25 ♗d2

Other moves are also possible, but Black has just enough play to hold the balance:

a) 25 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 and now:

a1) 26 ♗e3 ♕d3 is tough to meet, because 27 ♖e1 ♖xe3! 28 fxe3 ♕d2 wins for Black – Anand.

a2) 26 ♗f4 and now 26...c4 27 ♗xd6 cxb3, with compensation, is given by Anand, while 26...♕e4 27 ♖f1 c4 28 ♗a2 (28 ♗xd6 ♕xh4 29 gxh4 cxb3 leads to an equal ending) 28...♗c5! gives Black good counterplay. Instead 28...♗h1 29 ♕h3 ♗xf4 30 ♗b1 '±' is given by Lalić, although 30...♕f3 probably leaves White with nothing more than perpetual check.

b) 25 ♗e3 ♖e5! is given by Anand (instead 25...♕f5?! 26 ♖ac1 ♗e4 27 ♗d1 was Anand-Adams, Dortmund 2000, when Black doesn't have enough for the remaining pawn after taking one back on d5). Then 26 ♕h3 c4 27 ♗d1 (27 ♗a2? ♖h5! is very good for Black) 27...♗xd5 28 ♕g4 (28 ♖a6 ♕e4 29 f3 ♖xf3 30 ♗xf3 ♕xf3 31 ♖xd6 ♕h1+ 32 ♔f2 ♕f3+ is a drawing line given by Anand) 28...♖xe3! 29 ♖xe3 (or 29 fxe3 ♕f6 30 ♕e2 ♗c5 with excellent play) 29...♕f7 30 ♕e2 ♗c5 31 ♗c2 ♗xe3 32 fxe3 ♗f3 should give Black enough counterplay.

25...♗e4 26 ♖e2 ♕f5

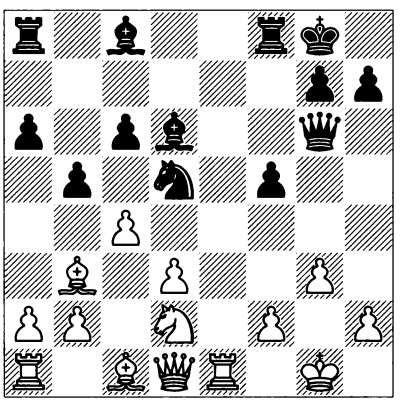
Threatening ...♕f3. 26...c4!? is also possible.

27 ♗f4 c4 28 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 29 ♗c2 ♗xf4 30 ♗xe4 ♕xe4 31 gxf4

½-½ Anand-Khalifman, FIDE Knockout, New Delhi 2000.

D33)

18 c4 *(D)*



B

This forcing move is critical, but it looks like Black is holding his own in the complications that follow.

18...f4! 19 ♘e4

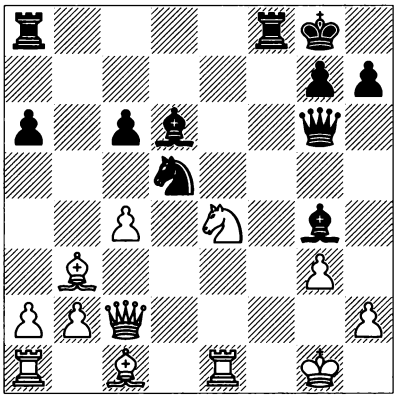
White must cover g3. Accepting the piece gets White throttled: 19 cxd5? fxg3 20 dxc6+ ♔h8 21 hxg3 ♗xg3 22 fxg3 ♕xg3+ 23 ♔h1 ♗g4 24 ♖e2 ♗xe2 25 ♕xe2 ♖f2 is winning for Black.

19...fxg3 20 fxg3

This looks the safest. Recapturing with 20 hxg3?! ♗g4 is similar, but White cannot defend along the second rank, and the f2- and h1-squares are more vulnerable, while the ugly 20 ♘xg3? is good for Black after 20...♗g4 21 ♕c2 (21 ♕d2 ♗b4) 21...♘b4.

20...♗g4 21 ♕c2 bxc4 22 dxc4 *(D)*

22 ♕xc4 ♗c7 23 ♕c2 ♔h8 24 ♗xd5 cxd5 25 ♘f2? (25 ♕xc7 is better, although Black has excellent compensation for the pawns after 25...dxe4 26 dxe4 ♖ac8) 25...♖ac8 (even 25...♗xg3 26 hxg3 ♗d1! is good for Black) 26 ♕a4 ♗d7 27 ♕h4 was played in Hellers-Wahls, World Junior Ch, Adelaide 1988. Now 27...♗b6! 28 ♗e3 ♖c2! gives Black a killing initiative.



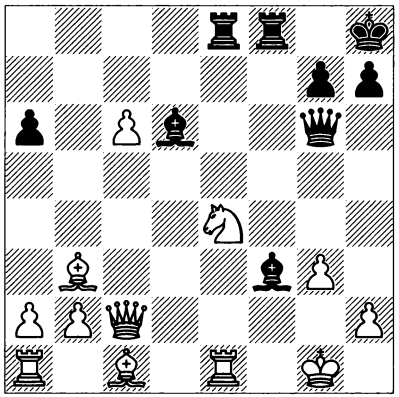
B

22...♖ae8

Tactical fishing with 22...♗b4? is nonsense. After 23 ♗d2 ♘f4 24 ♗xf4 ♗xe1 25 ♖xe1 ♗f5 the cleanest kill is 26 c5+ (26 ♕g2 was played in Smagin-Hebden, Moscow 1986 and here 26...♖ae8 gives Black some hope, but as we can see it is not terribly relevant because 26 c5+ just wins for White) 26...♔h8 27 ♗e5 ♖ae8 28 ♕c3!. After 28...♗xe4 29 ♖xe4 (Livie-Kristjansson, corr. 2003) the rook is immune because of mate on g7 and White has both a decisive material and positional advantage.

23 cxd5 ♗f3 24 dxc6+ ♔h8 *(D)*

W



This position is critical for 18 c4. White is a lot of material up, but he lags behind in development and his knight is caught in a nasty pin. The pendulum of theory has swung back and forth in this line. It now seems that Black is no worse, and in fact White should be careful.

25 ♗d5

This is the main move, but the position is very complicated and the alternatives must be carefully examined:

a) 25 ♗d2? loses to 25...♖xe4 26 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 27 ♕c3 ♕f5 0-1 A.Ivanov-Agapov, USSR 1984.

b) 25 c7?! ♗xe4 26 c8♕ ♖xc8! (stronger than Lalić's 26...♗xg3?! 27 ♕xe4 ♗xh2++ 28 ♔h1 ♖f1+! 29 ♖xf1 ♕xe4+ 30 ♔xh2 ♖xc8, which is unclear) 27 ♕xe4 ♗c5+ 28 ♗e3 (both 28 ♔h1 ♖f1+ 29 ♔g2 ♖g1+ 30 ♔h3 ♕h5+ 31 ♕h4 ♕xh4+ 32 ♔xh4 ♖xe1 −+ and 28 ♔g2 ♖f2+ 29 ♔h3 ♕h5+ 30 ♕h4 ♕f5+ 31 ♕g4 ♖xh2+ 32 ♔xh2 ♕xg4 −+ are just losing for White) 28...♕xe4 29 ♗xc5 ♕f3 30 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 ∓.

c) 25 ♗f4 ♗xf4 26 ♘f2 (26 c7? ♕b6+ 27 ♕f2 ♗xc7 28 ♘c5 ♗e5 ∓) 26...♖xe1+ (the computers are hot for this, but if Black wants to try to win, there is 26...♕xc2 27 ♗xc2 ♗e3 with compensation, as given by Lalić) 27 ♖xe1 ♕g5 28 ♕c3! ♗xg3 29 ♕xf3! ♗xf2++ 30 ♔h1! ♕c5 31 ♖e5! ♖xf3 32 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 33 c7 ♖f8 34 ♗e6 =. Ah, technology.

25...♗xg3 26 hxg3 ♖xe4!

As Lalić points out, 26...♗xe4? is a big mistake because after 27 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 (A.Gara-Pokorna, European Girls Under-18 Team Ch, Balatonlelle 2000) White has 28 ♔g2! +−. It is very strange that less than a year earlier Pokorna had played the correct 26...♖xe4! herself. See the next note.

27 ♗f4

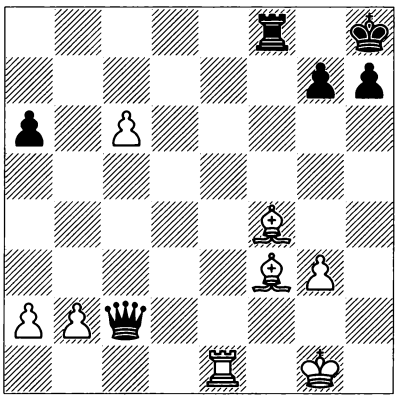
27 ♕f2? ♕h5 28 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 0-1 Maros-Pokorna, Slovakian Team Ch 1999/00.

27...♖xe1+

After 27...♖fxf4?, 28 ♕f2! miraculously turned the tables in Andrijević-Pavlović, Yugoslavia 1988.

28 ♖xe1 ♕xc2 29 ♗xf3 *(D)*

B



Originally it was thought that with ♖c1 coming, White was much better here.

29...♕xb2

Lalić claimed that Black was not worse, and it seems he was right.

30 c7

30 ♖c1? fails to 30...♖xf4. After 30 c7 the position is unclear. Black could try 30...♕f6, 30...h6, or even 30...h5!? with the idea 31 ♗xh5 ♔h7.

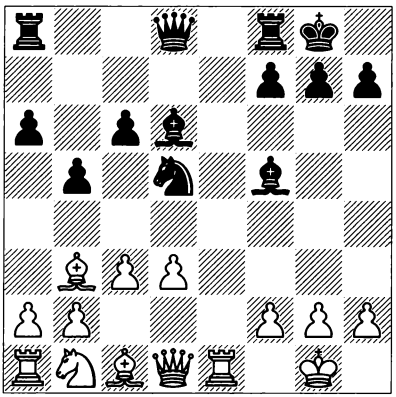
Conclusions

13...♕h4 may not give Black equality, but it remains a decent practical choice. Black should certainly choose 15...♕d7 or 15...♕f5, as other continuations look distinctly dubious. With precise play White may hold an edge, but over the board many players will have trouble dealing with Black's active piece-play.

6 Elite Equalizer: 12 d3 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♗f5

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d3 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♗f5 *(D)*

W



Foregoing the direct 13...♕h4 in favour of this positional move has become very popular, especially at top level. Black takes aim at the d3-pawn, hoping to make White's development more difficult. In fact, leaving the d-pawn to its fate with 14 ♘d2 is quite common, but White's real try for an edge comes from 14 ♕f3, when Black can either play 14...♕h4 after all, or try to take advantage of White's backward development with 14...♖e8.

A: 14 ♘d2 108
B: 14 ♕f3 109

14 ♗xd5 is not considered so dangerous, but it should not be ignored. After 14...cxd5 White has:

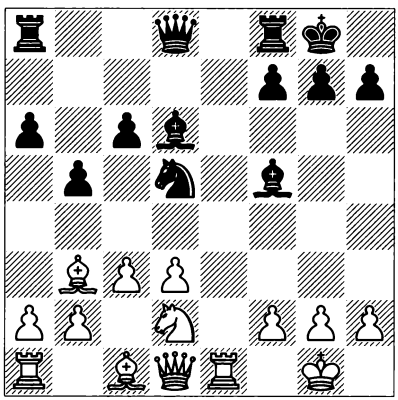
a) 15 ♗e3 ♕h4 16 g3 ♕h3 17 ♕e2 ♗g4 18 ♕f1 ♕h5 19 ♘d2 ♖ae8 (19...♖fe8!? gives Black the chance to avoid exchanging dark-squared bishops) 20 f3 ♗h3 21 ♕f2 ♕g6 22 ♘b3 ♕xd3 23 ♗c5 ♗xc5 24 ♘xc5 ♕g6 25 ♖ad1 ± Bologan-Tkachev, Enghien les Bains 2001.

b) With 15 ♕f3!?, White puts pressure on the d5-pawn and may try to exchange bishops with ♗f4. After 15...♖e8 (15...♕d7 16 ♗f4!) 16 ♗e3 ♗xd3 17 ♘d2 ♗g6 18 ♗f4 ♖xe1+ (Black may be better off acquiescing to the exchange of bishops with 18...♕c7 19 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 because 20 ♘b3 b4 gives him some counterplay) 19 ♖xe1 ♗f8 20 ♖e5 f6 (20...♕a5!?) 21 ♖xd5 ♕e8 Black had some compensation for the pawn in Hammer-Moradiabadi, Reykjavik 2008, although this is of a rather negative nature – only White can play for a win here.

A)

14 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



This move tends to lead to drawish positions. Heavy exchanges often leave a simple opposite-coloured bishops position with a symmetrical pawn-structure.

14...♘f4

Taking the pawn with 14...♗xd3 is also possible. 15 ♘f3 ♗g6 16 ♗g5 ♕d7 17 ♘e5 (17 ♗h4 ♖fe8 18 ♗xd5 cxd5 19 ♗g3 is recommended by Marin) 17...♗xe5 18 ♖xe5 ♖fe8 19 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 is quite solid for Black, although

of course White can hope to exploit his bishop-pair eventually. After 20 ♕d2 h6 21 ♗f4 ♖d8 22 ♖d1 ♗f5 23 ♗g3, as in R.Byrne-Angantysson, Reykjavik 1982, Black can play 23...♘xc3! 24 ♗xf7+ (not 24 ♕xd7? ♘e2+ 25 ♔f1 ♘xg3+ 26 hxg3 ♖xd7 ∓) 24...♔xf7 25 ♕xd7+ ♖xd7 26 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 27 bxc3 with a drawn ending.

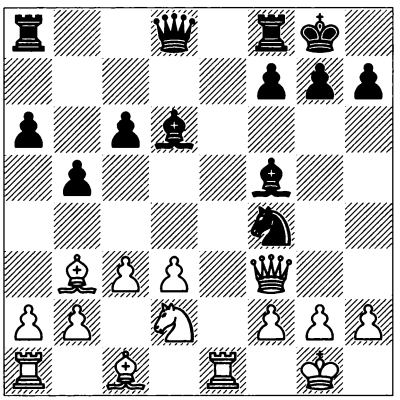
15 ♘e4

Other moves also offer little:

a) 15 d4 ♕g5 (not 15...♘xg2? 16 ♔xg2 ♕h4 17 ♘f1 ♕h3+ 18 ♔g1 ♗g4 19 ♖e3! +– Nunn) 16 g3 (after 16 ♕f3, rather than 16...♗g4 17 ♕xc6!, Black should play 16...♕g6!? with the initiative) 16...♘h3+ 17 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 18 ♔h1?! ♘d3 19 ♖e2 ♖ae8, with compensation, is given by Nunn.

b) 15 ♕f3 *(D)* and here:

B



b1) 15...♕d7 is solid enough. 16 ♘e4 ♗g4 17 ♕e3 ♘xd3 18 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 19 ♕e7 ♖ad8 20 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 ½-½ Smirin-Adams, Tilburg 1992.

b2) 15...♘xd3 16 ♕xf5 ♘xe1 17 ♘e4 g6 (17...♗e7? 18 ♗h6! gxh6 19 ♖xe1 ♗g5 20 f4 1-0 was Hage-Robak, corr. 1995, because after 20...♗h4, 21 ♘g5! hxg5 22 ♗c2 mates) and White does not seem to have more than 18 ♕g4 ♘d3 19 ♗g5 ♗e7 20 ♖d1 ♔g7 21 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 22 ♖xd3 f5 23 ♕h3 ♕xe4 24 ♖d7+ ♔f6 25 ♖d6+, with a draw, as given by Marin.

15...♘xd3 16 ♗g5

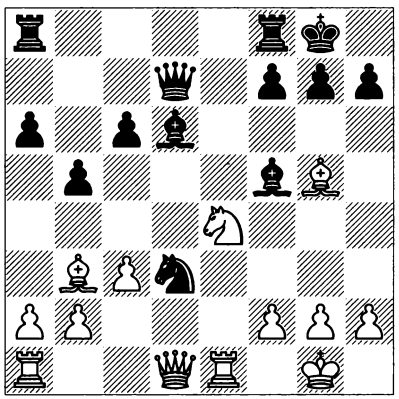
White develops with tempo. Other moves are harmless at best:

a) 16 ♘xd6?! leaves White lagging behind in development. 16...♕xd6 17 ♗e3 ♕g6 18 ♖f1 (18 ♖e2 ♗g4) 18...♘xb2 19 ♕d2 ♘d3 ∓ Bluvshtein-Onishchuk, Montreal 2003.

b) 16 ♕f3 ♗g6 17 ♖e2 ♗c7 (17...c5!?) 18 ♗g5 ♗xe4 19 ♖xe4 ♕xg5 20 ♕xd3 ♖ad8 21 ♕f3 c5 was completely level in J.Polgar-Adams, Enghien les Bains 2003.

16...♕d7 *(D)*

W



17 ♘xd6

The ambitious 17 ♖e3?! can only lead to trouble. After 17...♗xe4 18 ♖xe4 ♖ae8 19 ♕g4 ♕xg4 20 ♖xg4 (Ki.Georgiev-Nunn, Dubai Olympiad 1986) Black can grab the pawn with 20...♘xb2 as 21 ♗h6 can be met by 21...♗e5 ∓.

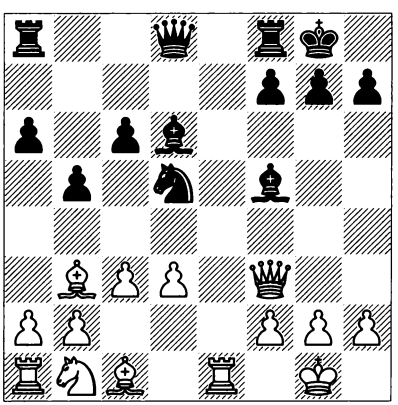
17...♕xd6 18 ♗c2 ♕g6 19 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 20 ♗e3

½-½ Anand-Leko, World Ch, Mexico City 2007.

B)

14 ♕f3 *(D)*

B



This is White's main attempt to seek any kind of advantage. White attacks d5 and may

also look to exchange dark-squared bishops with 15 ♗xd5 cxd5 16 ♗f4. Black's main tries are:

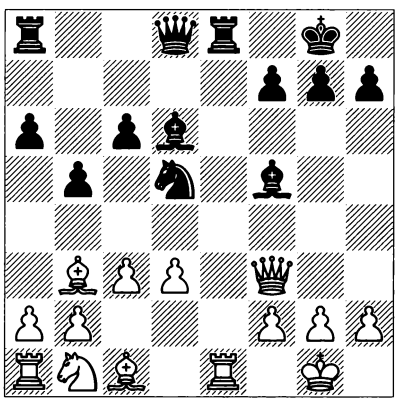
B1: 14...♖e8 110
B2: 14...♕h4 112

14...♕d7?! leads to a rather dreary position for Black. White can execute his positional plan with 15 ♗xd5 cxd5 16 ♗f4 (Black will regain his pawn, but his troubles are not over) 16...♗xf4 (16...♖fe8 17 ♘d2 ♗xf4 18 ♕xf4 ♗xd3 amounts to the same thing) 17 ♕xf4 ♗xd3 18 ♘d2 ♖fe8 (18...♖ae8 19 ♖e3 ♖xe3 20 ♕xe3 ♗g6 21 ♖e1 h6 22 ♘b3, as in Smagin-Geller, Moscow 1989, is similar) 19 ♘b3 (19 h3 h6 20 ♕d4 ♗g6 21 ♘b3 ♕c6 22 ♘c5 a5 23 a3 a4 24 ♖ad1 again gives us the same structure, Anand-Adams, Paris (rapid) 1992) 19...♕c6 20 ♕d2 ♗g6 21 ♘d4, as in Fressinet-Hamdouchi, Belfort 2003. White has a strong knight on d4 against a rather bad light-squared bishop, and Black faces a rather unpleasant defensive task.

B1)

14...♖e8 *(D)*

W



This is a fresh approach. Instead of rushing to a pawn-down ending that often arises in Line B2, Black keeps pieces on the board and hopes to get counterplay based on White's weak back rank.

15 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 16 ♘d2

16 ♗d2 is a bit passive, but Black should know what to do:

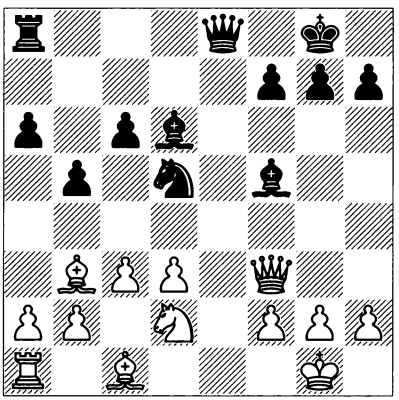
a) 16...♕e5?! 17 g3 ♖e8 18 ♘a3 ♗xa3? 19 bxa3? (19 ♖e1! ±) 19...♗h3 20 d4 ♕e2 21 ♕xe2 ♖xe2 22 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 23 ♗xe1 ♘b6 was given as equal by Bronstein, but clearly White can keep trying here.

b) 16...♘f4 17 ♗c2 (better than 17 ♘a3?! ♕e2 18 ♗xf4 ♕xf3 19 gxf3 ♗xf4 20 d4 ♖e8, as given by Karpov) 17...♖d8 18 ♘a3 ♕e2 19 ♕xe2 ♘xe2+ 20 ♔f1 ♘f4 21 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 22 d4. White has kept his pawns intact and still has an extra pawn.

c) The simple 16...♕d7 looks best, as White has trouble developing. After 17 h3 ♖e8 18 ♗xd5 cxd5, 19 b4?! was played in Todter-Benz, corr. 1994. Now 19...♕e6!, with ideas like ...♕e2 or ...♕g6, looks very good for Black. White should prefer 19 ♘a3, but after 19...♗xa3 20 bxa3 h6 White's extra pawn is pretty worthless and the game is equal.

We now return to 16 ♘d2 *(D)*:

B



16...♕e1+

This check is the most obvious move and is probably best. These alternatives are experimental and have not done so well:

a) 16...♕e5?! 17 ♘f1 ♗g6 was Kotronias-Pavlović, Vrnjačka Banja 2005. *New in Chess Yearbook 86* gives 18 ♗d2! ± with the idea 18...♗h5?! 19 g4 ♗g6 20 ♖e1 +–.

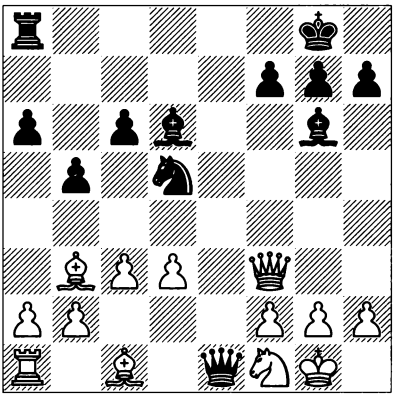
b) 16...♕d7?! 17 h3 ♖e8 18 ♘e4 ♗xe4 19 dxe4 ♕e6 (19...f5 20 e5!? ♗xe5 21 ♗e3 ± intending ♖d1, Dikmen-Harding, corr. 1999) 20 ♗e3 ♕xe4 21 ♕xe4 ♖xe4 22 ♖d1! ± Raidna-Delalleau, corr. 2001.

c) 16...♕e6 is a better version of line 'b', but it still falls short of equality. 17 h3 ♖e8 18 ♘e4 ♗xe4 19 dxe4 ♕e5?! (better is 19...♕xe4 20 ♕xe4 ♖xe4 but White certainly has some pull after 21 ♔f1 because of his bishop-pair) 20

♔f1 ♗c5 21 ♗d2 ♕h2 22 ♔e2 ♖e6 23 ♔d3! (White's king is brave and he will consolidate his extra pawn) 23...♖f6 24 ♕g3 ♕xg3+ 25 fxg3 ± Shirov-Onishchuk, Poikovsky 2008.

17 ♘f1 ♗g6 *(D)*

W



18 g3

Or:

a) 18 h3 ♖e8 19 ♗d1 and here:

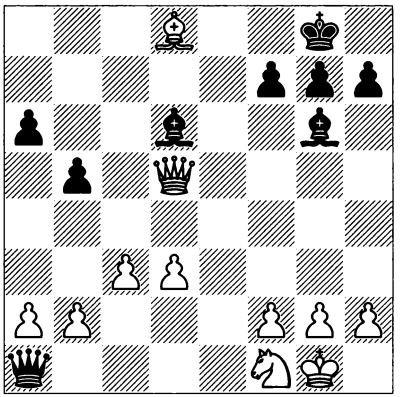
a1) 19...♘xc3!? may be playable. 20 bxc3 ♕xc3 21 ♖b1 ♖e1 22 ♗f4 was given as ± by Dolmatov, and this may be true. Black has a few ways to try to defend but White should be careful as well. 22...♗xf4 (after 22...♕xd3 23 ♕xd3 ♗xd3 24 ♗c2 ♖xb1 25 ♗xb1 ♗xb1 26 ♗xd6 ♗xa2 White can still try a bit) 23 ♕xf4 h6 24 ♗c2 ♖xf1+ (this looks safer than 24...♖xb1 25 ♗xb1 ♕b2 26 ♘d2 c5 27 ♔h2 c4 28 dxc4 ♗xb1 29 ♘xb1 ♕xb1 30 c5, although Black may be fine here) 25 ♖xf1 ♕xc2 26 ♖c1 ♕xa2 27 ♖xc6 ♗xd3 ½-½ Schreber-Simmelink, corr. 2001. White could certainly play on with 28 ♕d6!.

a2) 19...♗h2+ is thematic and solid. 20 ♔xh2 ♕xf1 21 ♗d2 ♗xd3 (worse is 21...♕xd3?! 22 ♕xd3 ♗xd3 23 a4 ± Dolmatov-Khalifman, Moscow 1990) 22 ♖c1 ♗e4! (not 22...♗e2? 23 ♗xe2 ♕xe2 24 ♖e1 – Dolmatov) 23 ♕g3 ♕c4 24 ♗b3 ♕e2 25 ♖e1 ♕xd2 26 ♖xe4 ♖f8! with counterplay, Sämundsson-Jönsen, corr. 2002. Black's active queen gives him good play.

b) 18 ♗xd5 cxd5 19 ♕xd5 ♖d8 20 ♗g5 ♕xa1 21 ♗xd8 *(D)* probably only leaves White on the better side of a draw:

b1) 21...♗f8 22 f4 (after 22 h4 h6 23 ♗b6 ♕xb2 24 ♕d8 ♕b1 25 ♗c5 ♗xd3 or 22 h3 ♕xb2 23 ♕a8 ♕a3 24 d4 h6 intending ...♔h7

B



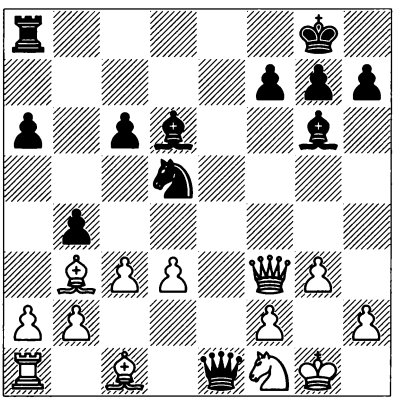
Black should hold) and now 22...♕xb2 was played in Chandler-Hebden, Catalan Bay 2004. Since 23 f5 ♗h5 24 f6 leaves White with some initiative, I would prefer 22...♕d1!? 23 ♕f3 ♕xf3 24 gxf3 ♗xd3 with a likely draw.

b2) 21...♗xh2+ 22 ♔xh2 ♕xf1 leaves White two pawns up but it is very difficult for him to make any progress. 23 ♗h4 (23 ♕a8 h6 looks alright for Black) 23...h6 24 d4 ♕b1 (24...♕e2!) 25 ♕a8+ (25 ♕b3 is a better try) 25...♔h7 26 ♕xa6 ♕xb2 27 d5 ♕xc3 28 ♗g3 ♕d3 29 d6 ♕d5 30 ♕a7 ½-½ Stellwagen-L'Ami, Schagen rapid 2005.

18...b4! *(D)*

This is much better than 18...♖e8?! 19 ♗d1 ♕e6 (19...♘xc3? 20 ♗d2 +–) 20 ♗d2 ♕h3 21 a4 ± Dolmatov-Kamsky, Dortmund 1993. Instead 21 ♕g4 is given a '!' in *Informator*, but after 21...♕xg4 22 ♗xg4 ♗xd3 23 ♗d7 ♖e2 24 ♗xc6 ♗e4! Black has good counterplay. However, 21 ♗c2 also looks good for White.

W



19 ♗xd5

Future developments are sure to come after 19 c4 ♘f6 (19...♘c7!? was suggested by Radjabov and Bacrot) 20 ♗d1 (Nataf suggests 20 ♕xc6! in *Informator*, giving many variations, of which his main line goes 20...♖d8 21 ♕b6 ♖d7 22 ♗c2! ♘g4 23 ♖b1 ♕e2 24 ♗d2 ♘e5 25 ♕e3 ♕h5 26 ♗d1 ♕f5 27 ♗e2 ♗f8 ±) 20...♖e8 21 ♗d2 ♕e5 22 ♕xc6 ♗f8, which gave Black good play in Stellwagen-Gustafsson, Bundesliga 2007/8.

19...cxd5 20 ♕xd5 ♖d8 21 ♗g5!

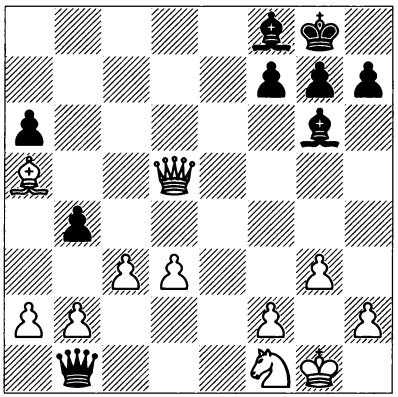
The play becomes very forcing from here on.

21...♕xa1 22 ♗xd8 ♗f8 23 ♗a5

23 cxb4 ♕xb2 gives Black counterplay.

23...♕b1! *(D)*

23...bxc3?! 24 ♗xc3 ♕d1 allows White to consolidate with 25 ♕e5! ♗xd3 26 ♕e1 ±.



24 ♔g2

24 d4 ♗e4 gives Black good counterplay.

24...♗xd3 25 ♘d2 ♕c2 26 ♕a8

No better is 26 ♕g5 h6 27 ♕e3 ♗c5 28 ♕e1?! (White should settle for 28 ♕xc5 ♕xd2 =) 28...♕xb2 29 ♗xb4 ♗xb4 30 cxb4 ♕xa2 ∓ Vouldis-Gustafsson, Greek Team Ch, Ermioni Argolidas 2005.

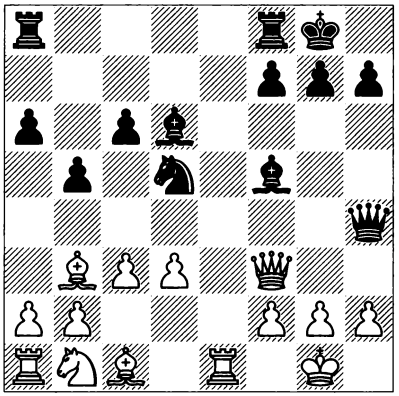
26...♕xd2 27 ♗xb4 h5! 28 ♕xf8+ ♔h7 29 ♕xf7 ♕e2

Black quickly delivered perpetual check in 'Team Ojjeh'-'Team Nataf', corr. 2003.

B2)

14...♕h4 *(D)*

This is the main line. Several lines head into endgames where Black is a pawn down but has excellent chances to hold. Aronian has just

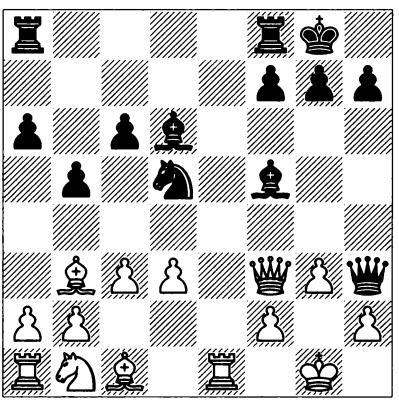


about perfected the art of drawing these endgames, but even he has occasionally run into some trouble in doing so. This type of position will certainly not suit everyone. Shirov keeps trying to prove something from the white side, while both Leko and Bacrot seem content making quick draws in this variation with either colour.

15 g3

15 h3?! ♖ae8 16 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 17 ♗d2 only leads to trouble for White after 17...♘f4!, while 15 ♕xf5 is not refuted but allows Black at least a draw after 15...♕xh2+ 16 ♔f1 ♖ae8 (16...♕h1+ 17 ♔e2 ♖ae8+ 18 ♗e3 ♘xe3 19 ♖xh1 ♘xf5+ 20 ♔f3 is equal) 17 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 18 ♗e3 ♕h1+ (after 18...♘xe3+ 19 fxe3 ♕h1+ 20 ♔f2 ♗g3+ 21 ♔xg3 ♖xe3+ 22 ♔f4 ♕f1+ 23 ♔xe3 ♕xf5 24 ♘a3 Black should probably just deliver perpetual check) 19 ♔e2 g6! 20 ♕f3 (20 ♕d7? ♖xe3+ mates) 20...♕c1 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 ♕xd5 ♗f8 23 b4! ♕b2+ 24 ♘d2 ♕xa1 25 ♘e4 =, as given by Finkel.

15...♕h3 *(D)*



Now White can continue his development or grab another pawn:

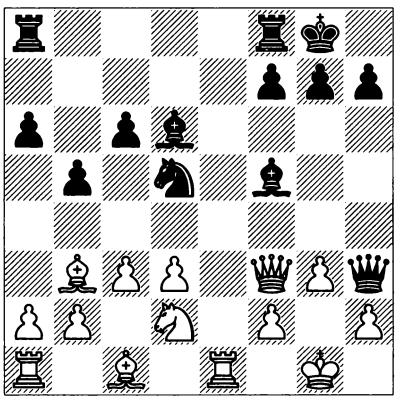
B21: 16 ♘d2 113
B22: 16 ♗xd5 114

16 ♗e3 does not give White much after 16...♗xd3 17 ♘d2 ♕f5 18 ♖ad1 (or 18 ♕xf5 ♗xf5 = Ivanchuk-Aronian, Amber Rapid, Monaco 2008) 18...♖fe8 (Black moves this rook to ensure he can keep his dark-squared bishop after the following sequence) 19 ♕xf5 ♗xf5 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 ♘b3 ♗e6 22 ♗c5 ♗c7 (this would not be possible if Black had a rook on f8), J.Polgar-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2008. Black's bishop-pair compensates for the isolated pawn.

B21)

16 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



This usually leads to an endgame where White retains a symbolic advantage. Black has less trouble defending here than he does a pawn down in Line B22.

16...♖ae8 17 ♘e4 ♗g4 18 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ 19 ♔xg2 f5

Both sides are caught in pins.

20 h3

The immediate 20 ♗f4 is similar, because 20...♗xf4 21 gxf4 fxe4 22 dxe4 is met by the same trick: 22...♗f3+! 23 ♔xf3 ♖xf4+ 24 ♔g3 ♖fxe4 25 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 26 f3 ♖e5 27 c4 bxc4 28 ♗xc4 a5. This has occurred several times at high level with all the games being drawn.

20...♗h5 21 ♗f4

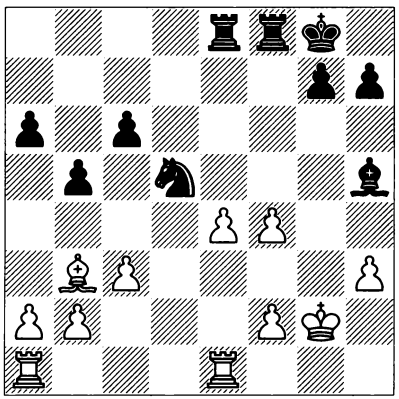
White can also try 21 g4 fxg4 22 hxg4 ♗xg4 23 a4, but Black does not have many troubles:

a) 23...♗b8 24 axb5 axb5 25 ♖a6 ♗d7 26 ♗d2 ♖e6 27 ♖e3 ♖g6+ 28 ♘g3 ♖gf6 29 ♘e4 ♖g6+ 30 ♘g3 ♖gf6 31 ♘e4 ♖g6+ ½-½ Agopov-Gustafsson, European Team Ch, Khersonisos 2007.

b) 23...b4 24 c4 ♘f4+ 25 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 26 c5+ ♔h8 (with compensation) ½-½ Kotronias-Asrian, European Clubs Cup, Kemer 2007.

21...♗xf4 22 gxf4 fxe4 23 dxe4 *(D)*

B



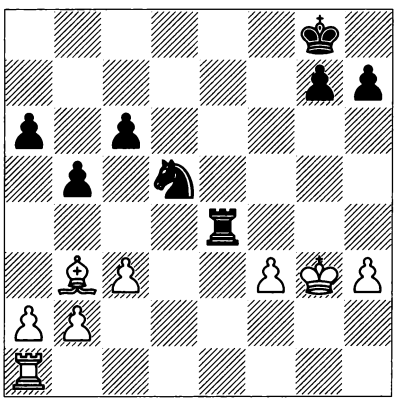
White will win back the piece and it looks like Black will remain a pawn down, but there is a neat tactical resource.

23...♗f3+!

By giving back the bishop instead of the knight, Black is able to establish material equality.

24 ♔xf3 ♖xf4+ 25 ♔g3 ♖fxe4 26 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 27 f3 *(D)*

B



27...♖e5

This is perhaps a tiny improvement on the already sufficient 27...♖e2 28 c4 bxc4 29 ♗xc4

♖xb2 30 ♗xa6 g5 of Nakamura-Aronian, Gibraltar 2005, when White may try a little tiny bit with 31 ♗c4.

28 c4 bxc4 29 ♗xc4 a5

This is the idea behind Black's 27th move – White does not even get a passed a-pawn.

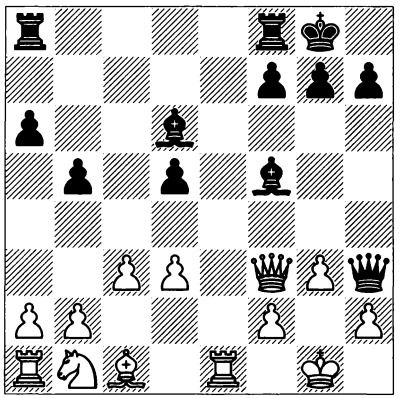
30 ♖c1 ♖g5+ 31 ♔f2 ♔f8 32 ♗f1 ♘e7

= J.Polgar-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2008.

B22)

16 ♗xd5 cxd5 *(D)*

W



This is more critical. There is a further split, as White can play positionally or grab material. We have:

B221: 17 ♗f4 114
B222: 17 ♗e3 114
B223: 17 ♕xd5 115

B221)

17 ♗f4

White aims to return the pawn for the type of positional advantage we have come across before, but in this case Black does not have to oblige.

17...♗g4!

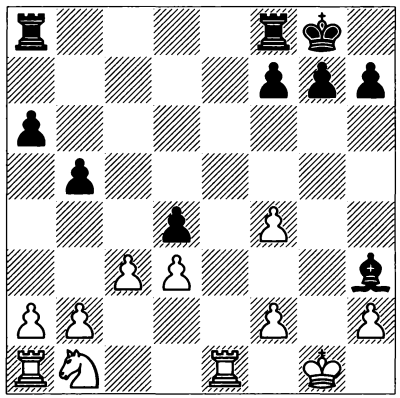
17...♗xf4?! 18 ♕xf4 ♗xd3 19 ♘d2 is quite pleasant for White.

18 ♕g2 ♗xf4 19 ♕xh3

Worse is 19 gxf4 d4 20 ♕g3?! ♖ad8 21 c4?! (21 cxd4 ♖xd4 22 ♖e3 ♕xg3+ 23 fxg3 ♖fd8 ∓) 21...♖d6! 22 ♖e5 f5! with a big advantage for Black in Kotronias-Grishchuk, FIDE Knockout, Tripoli 2004.

19...♗xh3 20 gxf4 d4! *(D)*

W



This second pawn offer gives Black enough play to hold the balance. White's pawns are all weak and Black's rooks will be very active.

21 ♘d2

21 cxd4 ♖fd8 22 ♖e3 ♗f5 23 a4 b4 24 ♘d2 ♖xd4 gave Black compensation in Grishchuk-Tkachev, Prague rapid 2002. Grishchuk was clearly convinced of the viability of Black's idea, as his game against Kotronias given above was played two years after this one.

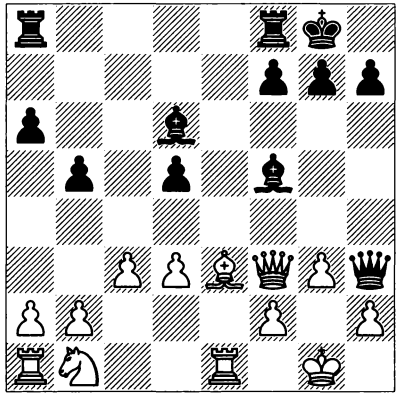
21...dxc3 22 bxc3 ♖fd8 23 ♖e3 ♗f5 24 ♘e4 ♖ac8

Black has enough compensation. 25 a4 g6 26 axb5 axb5 27 h4 ♖c6 28 ♖a5 ♖b6 29 ♖a7 h6 30 ♔h2 b4 31 cxb4 ♖xb4 32 h5 ♖bd4 33 hxg6 ½-½ Bauer-Adams, Senat 2003.

B222)

17 ♗e3 *(D)*

B



This move allows White to maintain an extra pawn, but queens usually stay on the board

and Black should be able to maintain the balance.

17...♗xd3 18 ♕xd5 ♖ad8 19 ♕f3

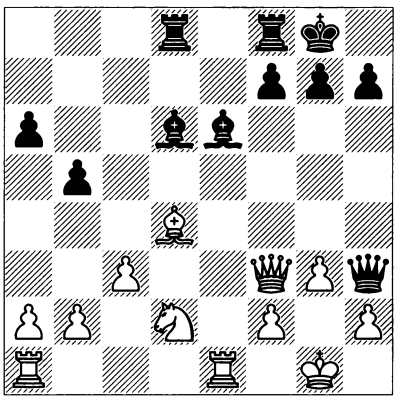
19 ♕g2 ♕f5!? (19...♕xg2+ and 19...♕h5 are covered under Line B223) 20 ♘d2 b4 21 ♗d4 bxc3 22 bxc3 h6 23 a4 ♖fe8 24 ♕c6 ½-½ Grishchuk-Khalifman, European Clubs Cup, Rethymnon 2003.

19...♗c4

We shall take this as the main line because it is Aronian's preference. 19...♗f5 20 ♘d2 ♗e6 is another way of reaching the same position, while 19...♕f5 20 ♕xf5 ♗xf5 21 ♘d2 ♖fe8 22 ♗d4 f6 23 ♘b3 ♔f7 was Kasimdzhanov-Onishchuk, Calvia Olympiad 2004. Black has some compensation here, but it still looks like an inferior version of the main line of B223.

20 ♘d2 ♗e6 21 ♗d4 *(D)*

B



With the bishop-pair and an active position, Black has decent compensation for the pawn. This position has been seen in a lot of high-level games, and White has made little progress.

21...♗b8

Alternatives also look OK for Black:

a) 21...h6 22 a3 ♗b8 23 ♕g2 ♕f5 24 f3 ♖fe8 25 ♘e4 ♗d5 26 ♖e2 ♖e6 27 ♖ae1 ½-½ Kasimdzhanov-Adams, Linares 2005.

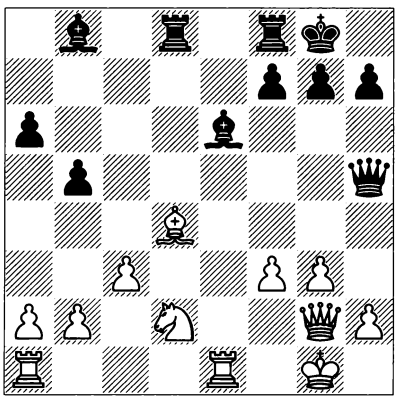
b) 21...♗e7 22 ♕g2 ♕h5 23 ♖e5 ♕g6 24 ♘e4 ♖d7 25 ♘c5 ♗xc5 26 ♖xc5 and now 26...♖fd8?! 27 ♕f3 h6 28 h4 ♗xa2 29 ♖c6 ♕c2 30 ♖xa6 ♗d5 31 ♕g4 ± gave White an extra pawn and the initiative in Naiditsch-Ivanchuk, European Clubs Cup, Izmir 2004. Black can improve by 26...♗xa2 with the idea 27 ♖c6 (not 27 ♖xa2? ♕b1+) 27...♕d3 28 ♖xa6 ♗d5 29 f3 ♖e7, when it is Black who has the initiative.

22 ♕g2

One way for White to force a draw is 22 ♘e4 ♗d5 23 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 24 ♕f6+ ♔g8 25 ♕g5+ ♔h8 26 ♕f6+ ♔g8 ½-½ Bacrot-Aronian, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2005.

22...♕h5 23 f3 *(D)*

B



Anand-Leko, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2007 was drawn here immediately.

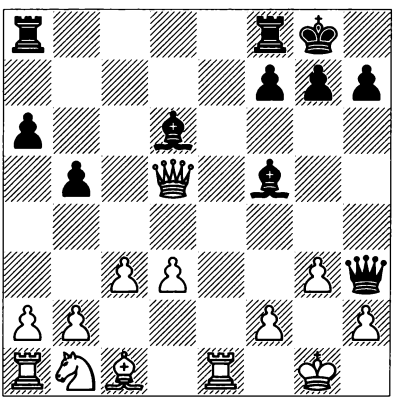
23...♕g6 24 a3 h5 25 ♖e2 ♖d5 26 ♖ae1 ♖fd8 27 ♘e4 ♗d6 28 ♕f2 ♖f5 29 ♘xd6

½-½ Anand-Aronian, Amber Rapid, Nice 2008. After 29...♖xd6 the opposite-coloured bishops and Black's counterplay against f3 make the position pretty level.

B223)

17 ♕xd5 *(D)*

B

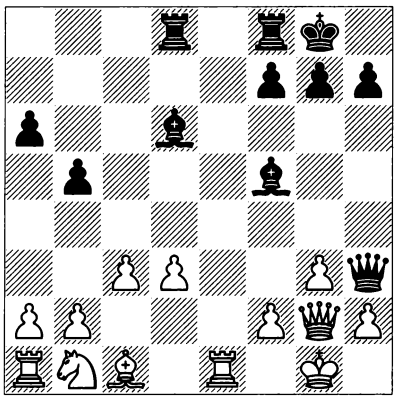


This is the critical test.

17...♖ad8 18 ♕g2 *(D)*

18 ♕f3 ♗b8!? 19 d4 ♗g4 20 ♕g2 ♕h5 21 ♘d2 ♖de8 22 ♖e3 f5!? gave Black compensation in Voss-Happe, German corr. Ch 1993-5.

B



Now we have a final branch. Black can keep queens on and try his luck in the middlegame two pawns down, or he can immediately regain one pawn and try to hold the ending. We have:

B2231: 18...♕h5 116
B2232: 18...♕xg2+ 118

B2231)

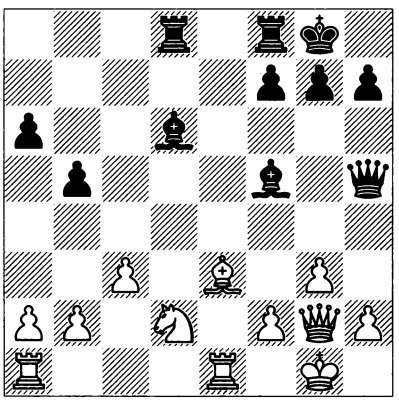
18...♕h5

This is a risky winning attempt, but it appears quite viable if Black is well prepared.

19 ♗e3 ♗h3

Black plays for a direct attack. Regaining a pawn with 19...♗xd3 is rather obvious, but Black remains a pawn down and must be careful or else White will take over the initiative. After 20 ♘d2 ♗f5 *(D)* White has:

W



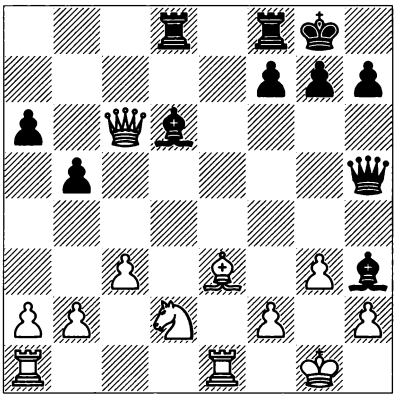
a) 21 ♗d4 ♗e6 (21...♗h3 22 ♕f3 ♕xf3 23 ♘xf3 ♖fe8 is also possible) 22 ♕f3 ♕g6 23 ♕c6 (23 ♕e4 ♕h5 24 ♕f3 ♕g6 25 ♕e4 ♕h5 26 ♕f3 ½-½ Wang Hao-Yakovenko, Russia-China match, Nizhny Novgorod 2007) and now Pavlović's 23...♗f4?! 24 ♘e4 ♕h5?! 25 gxf4 ♕g4+ 26 ♘g3 ♗d5 27 ♕c5 ♕f3 28 ♔f1 ♗c4+ 29 ♖e2 ♖c8 fails to 30 ♕e5, so Black should try 23...♕c2!? 24 ♘e4 ♗e7.

b) After 21 ♕c6 Black has experienced some problems in practice, but there is some hope.

b1) 21...♗e6? 22 ♕xa6 ♕d5 23 ♕b6 ♗h3 24 f3 f5 25 ♕d4 ♕c6 26 ♕h4 ♗c5 27 ♗d4 +– Shirov-Yakovenko, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

b2) 21...♗h3 *(D)* and here:

W



b21) 22 ♕xa6?? is a blunder. Black wins with 22...♗xg3! 23 hxg3 ♖xd2! intending ...♕f3.

b22) 22 ♗d4 ♗b8 23 ♖e3 (23 ♘e4?! ♖xd4! 24 cxd4 ♕f3 25 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 26 ♕xf6 gxf6 ∓) 23...♖d6 24 ♕b7 ♗d7! gave Black compensation for the pawn in Smeets-Khalifman, Amsterdam 2007. The bishop is heading for the c6-square.

b23) 22 a4 looks critical, but an idea of Pavlović's may resurrect this line for Black: 22...bxa4! (22...♗b8 23 axb5 axb5 24 ♖a5 ♗d7 25 ♕c5 ♕g6 26 ♕g5 ♕d3?! {Kosten's idea 26...♕c6 27 ♗d4 f6 looks like a better try} 27 ♗d4 f6 28 ♕d5+ ♔h8 29 ♘b3 ♖de8 30 ♖aa1 ± Stellwagen-Pashikian, Erevan 2007) 23 ♕xa4?! (23 ♖xa4 ♗d7 24 ♕xd6 ♗xa4 25 ♕xa6 and even 23 ♕xa6 look like better tries) 23...♗c5! 24 ♗xc5 (24 ♕d1?! ♕xd1 25 ♖axd1 ♗xe3 26

♖xe3 ♗f5! ∓) 24...♖xd2 (intending ...♕xc5 and ...♕d5) 25 ♕c4 ♖xb2 gives Black sufficient play. White cannot play 26 ♗xf8?? because of 26...♕f3.

20 ♕h1

This looks funny, but after 20 ♕c6 ♗e6 21 ♘d2 ♗d5 22 ♕xa6 ♕h3 23 ♘e4 f5 Black will win a piece. The position is still very messy though because White will gain several pawns in return.

20...f5 21 ♗b6

Shirov's latest attempt 21 f4 was not successful after 21...♗c7 22 ♘d2 ♖xd3 23 ♘b3 ♗g4 24 ♕g2 ♗f3 25 ♕f2 ♗a8 26 ♘c5 ♖d6 27 ♗d4 ♕f7 with compensation, Shirov-Yakovenko, Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008.

21...♖d7

Bacrot also considered 21...f4 22 ♗xd8 f3, but his second Naiditsch found 23 ♗b6! ♗g2 24 ♕xg2 fxg2 25 ♘d2 ♕g6 26 ♗d4 ♕xd3 27 ♖ad1, when White will have more than enough for the queen.

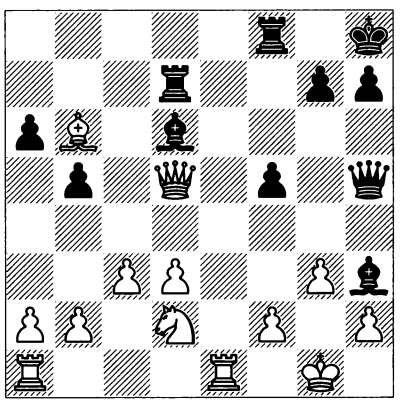
22 ♕d5+

White pins the d6-bishop and the f-pawn with gain of tempo. Instead 22 ♘d2 allows Black to attack with 22...f4.

22...♔h8 23 ♘d2 *(D)*

This allows an interesting shot, but 23 ♗d4 allows 23...♖fd8 24 ♕c6 ♖c7 25 ♕h1 f4 26 ♘d2 ♖f8 with good counterplay.

B



23...♗xg3! 24 ♕xd7 ♗f4 25 ♕b7

White should probably try 25 ♕d5 ♗xd2 26 ♗d4 ♗xe1 27 ♖xe1 ♖e8 28 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 and here both 29 ♗e5 and 29 ♕e5 may be somewhat drawish but White could try to win with no risk at all.

25...♗xd2 26 ♗d4 ♖g8 27 ♖e7?!

Already White should think about forcing a draw with 27 ♔h1 ♗g4 28 ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 29 ♕b8+ ♖g8 30 ♕e5+.

27...♗c1! *(D)*

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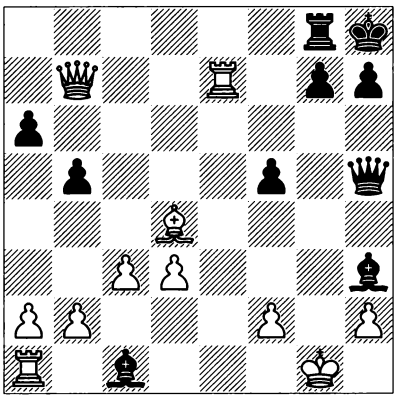


A clever interference move, which Bacrot found before the game!

28 ♖e1

Not 28 ♖xc1? ♕g5+ mating.

28...♗f4

28...♗d2 repeats, but Bacrot already feels compelled to try for more.

29 ♖e3

Other moves are worse:

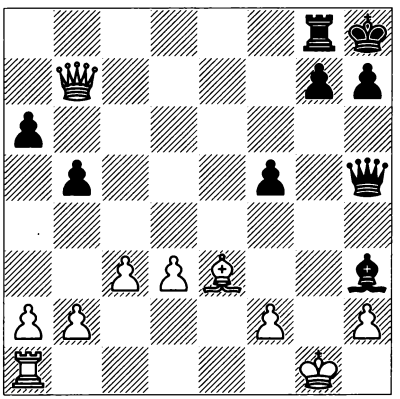
a) 29 ♗e5? ♗g4! 30 ♗xf4 ♗f3 31 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 −+.

b) 29 ♕c6? ♗xh2+! 30 ♔xh2 (30 ♔h1 ♗d6! ∓) 30...♗g4+ 31 ♔g3 f4+! 32 ♔xf4 ♖f8+ −+.

29...♗xe3 30 ♗xe3 *(D)*

30 fxe3 ♕e2 gives Black the initiative.

B



30...♖e8

After 30...h6 31 ♕c7 ♖e8 32 ♗d4 ♖e7 33 ♕g3 ♔h7 Bacrot prefers Black, although the position is still very unclear. This position was seen in practice in Sutovsky-Yakovenko, Poikovsky 2008. Both sides managed to hold... Black can also play the forcing 30...♕g4+ 31 ♔h1 f4 32 ♖g1 ♕c8 33 ♕xc8 ♗xc8 34 ♗xf4 ♗b7+ 35 ♖g2 ♖e8 36 ♗e3. White has two pawns for the exchange but I have the feeling Black is still a little better.

31 ♗d4?

31 ♕c7 h6 32 ♗d4 ♖e7 33 ♕g3 ♔h7 transposes to Sutovsky-Yakovenko given above and looks to be the safest option at this point. 31 ♔h1 is also better than the move played.

31...♕g4+ 32 ♔h1 h6! 33 f4

White wants to play ♖g1, but the immediate 33 ♖g1 loses to 33...♕xg1+!.

33...♖e7 34 ♕a8+

Or 34 ♕c6 ♕xf4 35 ♕g6 ♗f1 36 ♕g3 ♕xg3 37 hxg3 ♗xd3 ∓.

34...♔h7 35 ♗e5

35 ♖g1 ♕xf4 is also bad.

35...♕e2 36 ♖g1 ♗g4 37 ♖xg4 fxg4 38 d4? ♕f1# (0-1)

Smeets-Bacrot, Wijk aan Zee 2008.

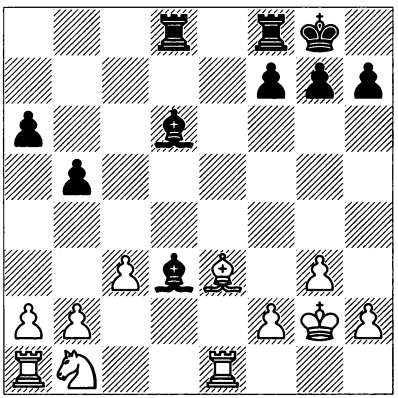
B2232)

18...♕xg2+

This is Black's main choice and is always played by the Marshall's top practitioner, Aronian. Black should hold the endgame, but he will have to work.

19 ♔xg2 ♗xd3 20 ♗e3 *(D)*

B



20...♗e4+

This is the latest finesse, by which Black relocates his bishop immediately. 20...♖fe8 is the 'old move'. After 21 ♘d2 Black has tried:

a) 21...f6 22 ♗b6 ♖b8 23 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24 ♘b3 ♗c4 25 ♖d1 ♗f8 26 ♗e3 (White has made some progress; in order to hold endings like this with Black, it is important to know how they can be lost) 26...♔f7 27 ♘a5 ♗e6 (27...♗xa2 28 b3) 28 a3 ♖c8 29 f3 ♖c7 30 ♖d8 ♖c8 31 ♘b7! ♖c7 32 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 33 ♖xd6 ± Shirov-Kariakin, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

b) 21...b4 22 ♗b6 (after 22 ♗d4 bxc3 23 ♗xc3 f6 24 ♖ad1 ♖xe1 25 ♖xe1 ♔f7 26 f3 ♗e7 27 g4 h5 28 h3 hxg4 29 hxg4 ♗b5 Black managed to draw without too many issues in Stellwagen-Harikrishna, Wijk aan Zee 2008) 22...♖xe1 23 ♖xe1 ♖b8 24 ♗a5 bxc3 25 ♗xc3 f6 26 ♘e4 ♗f8 27 f3. Both sides have played very logically and now it is a matter of how much progress White can make. This position has been seen in a couple of very high level encounters:

b1) 27...♗c4 28 b3 (perhaps 28 a3, as in the next note, is a better try) 28...♗b5 29 ♗a5 ♖c8 30 ♘c3 ♗c6 31 ♖d1 ♔f7 32 ♘e2 h5 33 ♖c1 ♗d7 34 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 was quickly drawn in Shirov-Leko, Morelia/Linares 2008.

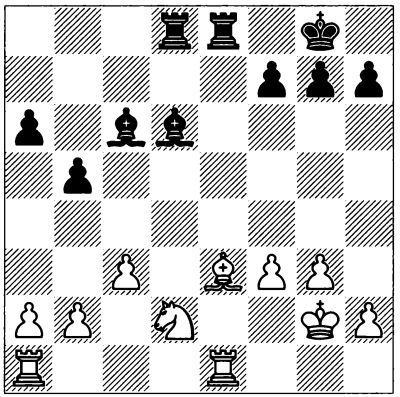
b2) 27...♖c8 28 ♖d1 ♗c4 29 a3 ♗b5 30 g4 ♗c6 31 ♖d3 ♖e8 32 ♖d4 ♖b8 33 h4 ♗e7 34 h5 (White is clearly making some progress) 34...♖d8 35 ♖c4 ♗b5 36 ♖c7 ♖d7 37 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 38 h6 gxh6 39 ♗xf6 ♗f8 40 ♗d4 ± Shirov-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2008.

If White can avoid an opposite-bishop ending and slowly gain space, he has chances of success in converting the extra pawn. Because of this, we often see Black carefully advancing his kingside pawns – it is difficult for White to win on the queenside alone, and the weaknesses on White's kingside give Black a target for creating counterplay. Black has an unopposed light-squared bishop, so he will generally arrange his kingside pawns to help control the dark squares with ...f6, ...g5 and ...h5.

21 f3 ♗c6 22 ♘d2 ♖fe8 *(D)*

23 ♘b3

23 ♗d4 is also possible. After 23...♖xe1 (Black held without breaking much of a sweat after 23...h5 in Leko-Aronian, Karen Asrian

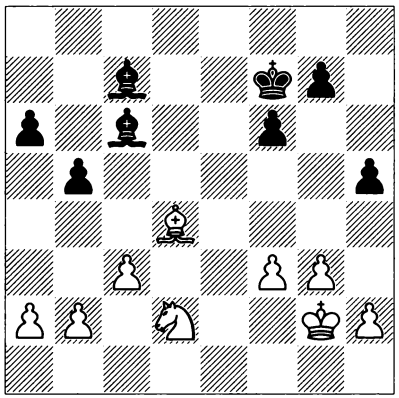


Memorial rapid, Erevan 2008) 24 ♖xe1 f6 25 ♘f1 (or 25 ♔f2 h5 26 ♘e4 ♗f8 27 ♖e2 ♔f7 28 ♘c5 ♗xc5 29 ♗xc5 ♖d7 30 ♗d4 a5 31 b3 ½-½ Leko-Naiditsch, Dortmund 2008) 25...h5 26 ♗b6 ♖e8 27 ♘e3 ♔f7 28 ♔f2 h4 29 ♖d1 ♗b8 30 ♘c2! (Black must be careful) 30...g5 31 gxh4 gxh4 32 ♖d4 ♖h8 33 ♘b4 ♗a8 34 f4 a5 35 ♘a6! (now White's advantage is clear) 35...♔e6 36 ♘xb8 ♖xb8 37 ♗xa5 ♖g8 38 ♔e3 ♖g2 39 ♖d2 h3 40 ♖xg2 hxg2 41 ♔f2 ♔f5 42 ♗d8 ♔xf4 43 ♗xf6 ♔g4 44 h4 White eventually squeezed out a win in Bacrot-Sargisian, French Team Ch, Evry 2008. Although the endgame is drawish, Black must defend well. White *can* win against inaccurate play. Usually Black is better off keeping both of his bishops on the board. As long as a pair of rooks remains, Black must be very careful about allowing opposite-coloured bishops.

23...f6 24 ♗b6

Trading rooks tends to ease Black's defence, but White made little progress after 24 ♔f2 ♗c7 25 ♘d4 ♗d7 26 ♖ad1 ♔f7 27 ♖d2 ♗c8 28 ♖ed1 h5 29 ♘e2 ♖xd2 30 ♖xd2 ♗e6 31 b3 g5 in Leko-Sargisian, Karen Asrian Memorial rapid, Erevan 2008. Black also held easily after 24 ♘d4 ♗b7 25 g4 ♗c5 26 b4 ♗xd4 27 ♗xd4 ♖xe1 28 ♖xe1 ♔f7 29 ♗c5 ♖d7 30 h4 ♗d5 31 a3 ♗e6 3 2 ♗d4 ♗c4 in Naiditsch-Bacrot, Dortmund 2009.

24...♖xe1 25 ♖xe1 ♖d7 26 ♖d1 ♔f7 27 ♗c5 ♗c7 28 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 29 ♘d2 h5 30 ♗d4 ♗c6 *(D)*



This is an ideal defensive stance for Black. The rooks are off the board and Black has gained space on the kingside. It is also difficult for White to do anything on the queenside. White is certainly not going to lose, but he cannot make any progress either.

31 b3 f5 32 ♔f2 g5 33 ♗e3 g4 34 f4 ♔e6 35 ♗d4

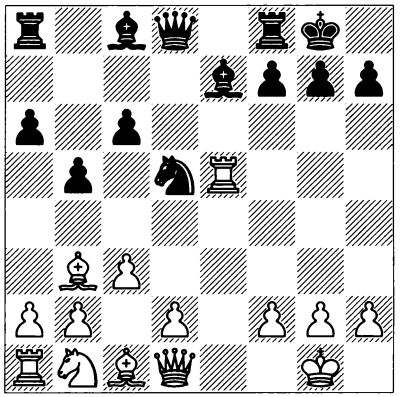
½-½ Bacrot-Aronian, European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008.

Conclusions

Currently this is Black's main choice against 12 d3. After the main move 14 ♕f3, Black can try the relatively unexplored 14...♖e8 or play the standard 14...♕h4. The most critical line 15 g3 ♕h3 16 ♗xd5 cxd5 17 ♕xd5 ♖ad8 18 ♕g2 offers Black a choice. He can head into an endgame which gives him excellent drawing chances, although many may find it rather depressing to defend. The other option is to keep queens on the board while two pawns down. This is riskier, but it also allows Black to keep winning chances.

7 Early Deviations

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 *(D)*



W

In this chapter we look at various lines arising after 11...c6 where White avoids the main lines of the first six chapters. The first part deals with 12 ♖e1, which can be used as a trans-positional device. This is in fact a common move-order to reach the 12 d3 lines, but here White hopes to avoid the 13...♗f5 line of the previous chapter. The second part is usually just called 'the 13 ♖e2 line'. White hopes the rook will serve some defensive purpose on the second rank. Next is the Kevitz Variation, characterized by the sequence 12 ♗xd5 cxd5 13 d4 ♗d6 14 ♖e3. The rook is more active on e3 than it would be on e1 or e2, but it can also be a target itself. The next section looks at the rather fashionable 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♕e2. White focuses on evicting the black queen from the kingside before developing his queenside. Finally we examine the immediate capture on d5 with 15 ♗xd5.

Section 7.1: **12 ♖e1** 120
Section 7.2: **12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e2** 125
Section 7.3: **12 ♗xd5 cxd5 13 d4 ♗d6 14 ♖e3** 128
Section 7.4: **12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♕e2** 131
Section 7.5: **12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗xd5 and rarer moves** 134

Section 7.1

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 ♖e1 *(D)*

12 g3 is similar, and after 12...♗d6 13 ♖e1 we reach the same position. Black can also try the rare 12...♗f6, aiming for positional compensation rather than a direct attack. After 13 ♖e1 c5 14 d4 (14 d3 b4! is given by Nunn) 14...♗b7 15 dxc5 Black has:

a) 15...♖e8 16 ♘d2 ♘xc3 17 bxc3 ♗xc3 18 c6 (this finesse is often praised, but I think 18 ♖b1 ♕d7 19 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 20 ♘f1!? ♕c6 21 f3 ♕xc5+ 22 ♔g2 is more critical) 18...♗xc6 19 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 20 ♖b1 ♖d8 21 ♕c2 ♗xd2 22 ♗xd2 ♗e4 23 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 24 ♕b3+ ♗d5 25 ♕b4 ♕e4 26 ♕xe4 ♗xe4 27 ♖b2 ♖d4 gave Black good winning chances despite the opposite-coloured bishops because of the weak a2-pawn in Braga-Geller, Amsterdam 1986.

b) 15...♕d7 16 ♘d2 (White could try 16 ♗e3 or 16 ♕d3) 16...♘xc3 17 bxc3 ♗xc3 18 ♖b1 ♖ad8 19 ♖e2?! (19 ♖e3 ♗xd2 20 ♗xd2 ♕xd2 21 ♕xd2 ♖xd2 22 ♖e7) 19...♕c6 20 f3 ♕xc5+ 21 ♔g2 ♗xf3+! gave Black counterplay in Ernst-Dam, Lugano 1988.

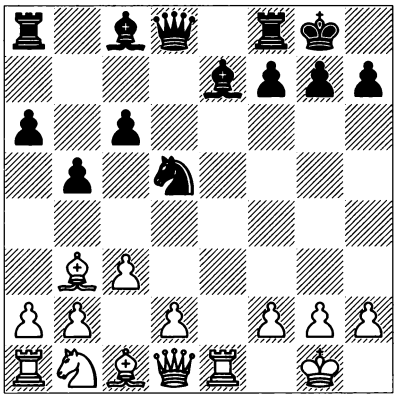
Despite these successes for Black, 12...♗f6 has not been popular at all. Of course part of this is due to the scarcity of games with 12 g3, but I think there is some suspicion concerning Black's play here.

12...♗d6 13 g3

White can also play 13 d3, transposing to the main lines with 12 d3, or 13 d4, heading for the main lines with 12 d4.

The text-move prevents ...♕h4, so Black has to find another way to create play. Black can still head straight to the kingside with 13...♕d7, and

B



after 14 d3 (14 d4 again reaches the main lines of 12 d4 after the reply 14...♕h3), 14...♕h3 transposes to Chapter 5. White may be happy with this though, because he has avoided the lines of Chapter 6. If Black does not want to head into Chapter 5, he has a couple of decent alternatives:

A: 13...♖e8 121
B: 13...♗f5 122

A)

13...♖e8 *(D)*

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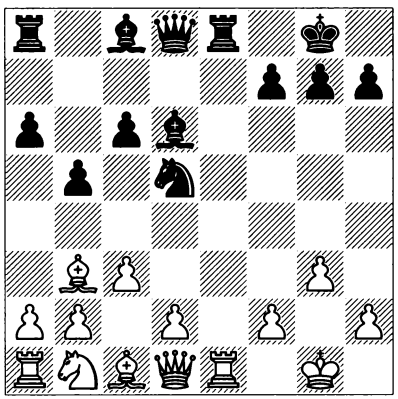

This rare line was used by Aronian to defeat Anand. It looks a bit speculative, but has its logic. Black exchanges off White's active rook and may bring his other rook into play with the manoeuvre ...♖a7, which is more typical of the Sveshnikov Sicilian than the Ruy Lopez!

14 d4

After 14 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 15 d4 ♖a7 16 ♘d2 ♖e7 17 ♘f3 f6 Black has reasonable compensation for the pawn. Then 18 ♔g2 ♗g4 19 h3 ♗h5 20 ♗d2 ♖e2 21 g4 ♗xg4! 22 hxg4 ♕e4 23 ♕h1 (23 ♕xe2 ♕xe2 24 ♖e1 may be a better try, but White cannot be happy here) 23...♖xd2 24 ♖e1 ♕xg4+ 25 ♔f1 ♖xb2 26 ♗xd5+ cxd5 27 ♘e5 ♗xe5 28 ♕xd5+ ♔f8 29 dxe5 ♕h3+ (Black should just trade queens with 29...♕c4+!, when he can obviously try to win with no risk) 30 ♔g1 ♕g4+ 31 ♔f1 ♕h3+ ½-½ was Z.Almasi-Yakovenko, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

14...♖xe1+

14...♖a7 was suggested by Aronian. Play could then transpose to the previous note.

15 ♕xe1 ♖a7 16 ♗e3

After 16 ♘d2 ♖e7 17 ♕f1 Black has to play very accurately to obtain compensation according to Aronian. After 17...♕e8 18 ♘f3 Black could play 18...f6 or 18...♗g4.

16...♖e7 17 ♘d2 ♕e8 *(D)*

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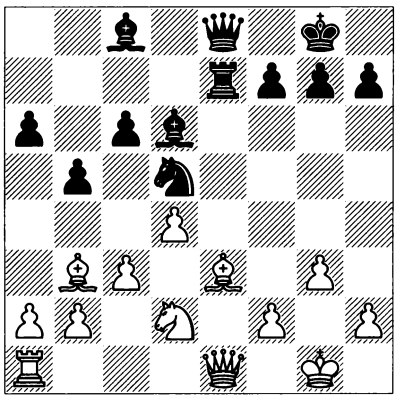


18 ♘f1

Safer is 18 ♗xd5 cxd5, but then Black's positional compensation is clearer because of the bishop-pair.

18...h5 19 a4 ♗e6 20 ♗d1

Anand embarks on a curious journey with this bishop. 20 ♗c2 ♗h3 21 ♕e2 g6 is another possibility.

20...h4 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♗f3 ♗h3 23 ♗xd5

It looks very strange to play ♗d1-f3xd5, but Black seems to have decent play in any event.

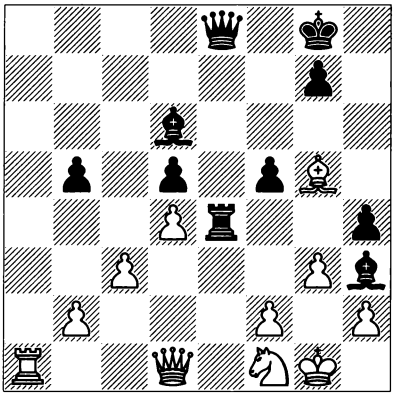
23...cxd5 24 ♕d1 f5 25 ♗g5

25 ♕b3 ♕f7 26 ♗g5 ♖e4 27 ♗xh4 ♔h7 28 ♕d1 ♕g6 29 ♗d8 is similar to the main line.

25...♖e4 *(D)*

Aronian sacrifices a second pawn to increase the activity of his pieces.

W



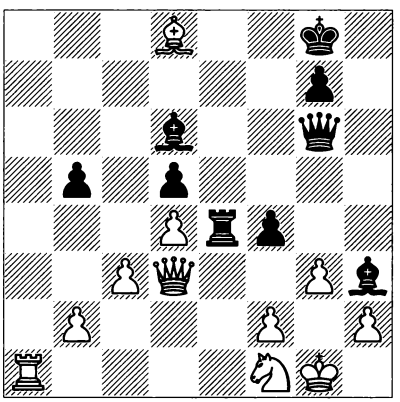
26 ♗xh4 ♕g6 27 ♗d8 f4 28 ♕d3 *(D)*

Aronian mentions a couple of alternatives, but he remains optimistic about Black's chances.

a) 28 ♗b6 "is stupid" according to Aronian. 28...♖e8 29 ♗c5 ♗c7 and the c5-bishop is out of play.

b) 28 ♗h4 f3 29 ♕xf3 ♖xh4 30 ♕xd5+ ♔h7 31 ♖a8 ♕e4 (31...♕b1 allows a perpetual check) 32 ♕xe4+ ♖xe4 33 ♘e3 is an odd material situation where White has four pawns for a piece while Black has a powerful bishop-pair. Analysis engines tend to favour White here, at least slightly, while Aronian thinks that White is hoping for a draw. I have to agree with the human here – with two good bishops, Black certainly should not lose and may even press a little.

B



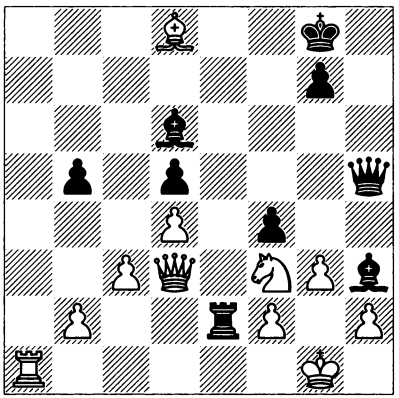
28...♕h5 29 ♘d2?

29 ♗b6 ♗b8 30 ♗c5 may be a better try, but with the white bishop away from the kingside, Black still has compensation for the pawns.

29...♖e2 30 ♘f3 *(D)*

This allows a hammer-blow, but after 30 ♗h4 ♖xd2 31 ♖a8+ ♗f8 32 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 33 ♕xd2 the calm 33...♔g8! leaves Black with a winning attack.

B



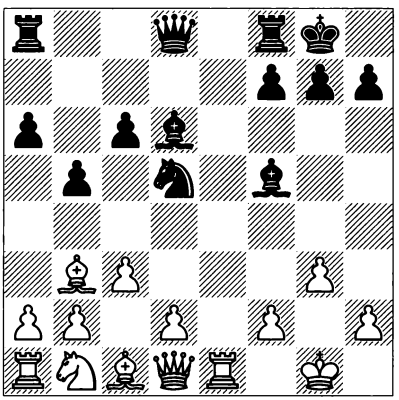
30...♖e3! 31 fxe3 ♕xf3 32 ♕c2 fxg3 33 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 34 ♔h1 ♗f5

0-1 Anand-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2008.

B)

13...♗f5 *(D)*

W



Black plays along the lines of Chapter 6, but here White will play d4, giving the position an original flavour. This line has been holding up very well for Black.

14 d4 ♕d7 15 ♗e3

The alternative 15 ♘d2 does not look terribly dangerous. 15...♖ae8 16 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 17 ♘f1 ♗g4 18 f3 and here:

a) 18...♗h3 19 ♔f2 (this looks odd) 19...♕f5 (19...h5!?) 20 ♘e3 ♕h5 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 f4

♕h6 23 ♕f3 ♗f5! and now 24 h4?! ♗e4 gave Black excellent play in Bologan-Sargisian, Wijk aan Zee 2007. 24 ♘xf5?! ♕xh2+ 25 ♔f1 (25 ♕g2 ♖e2+) 25...♕h3+ is also bad for White, so 24 ♔g1 is probably best, but Black still has good compensation after 24...♗e4.

b) 18...♗h5 19 a4 (19 ♗xd5 cxd5 20 ♗f4?! ♗xf4 21 gxf4 ♗g6 22 ♕d2 h5 23 ♖e1 ♖xe1 24 ♕xe1 ♕f5 25 ♕c1 h4 was good for Black in A.Ivanov-Geller, New York Open 1990) 19...h6 (19...♕e6!?) 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♗d2 ♕b7 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 23 ♗f4 ♗f8 24 g4 ♗g6 25 ♘e3 ♗d6 26 ♘g2 (26 ♗xd6 ♖xe3) 26...♗f8 27 b4 ♕c6 was level in A.Ivanov-Friedel, USA Ch, Tulsa 2008.

15...♖ae8

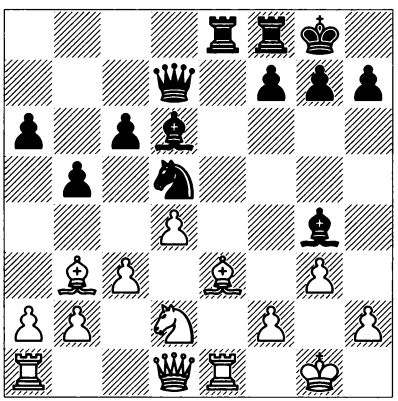
15...♖fe8?! is worse because Black may want to push ...f5-f4 later.

16 ♘d2

Neither 16 ♗xd5 cxd5 nor 16 a4 ♗g4 looks very dangerous for Black.

16...♗g4 *(D)*

W



17 ♕b1

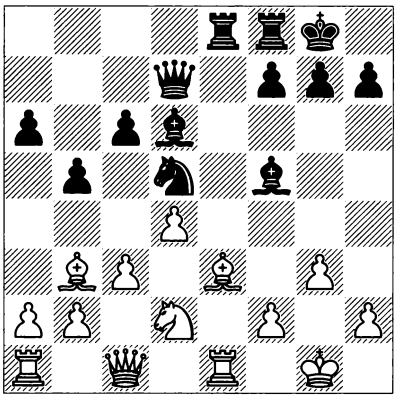
White can also play 17 ♕c2. Then:

a) 17...♖e7!? 18 ♗g5 ♖xe1+ 19 ♖xe1 h6 20 ♗e3 ♖e8 21 c4 ♗f5 22 ♕d1 ♘b4 gave Black counterplay in Hou Yifan-Cheparinov, Wijk aan Zee 2008.

b) Pavlović's idea 17...♘xe3!? is the simplest plan for Black if it works, and is certainly worth considering if Black wishes to avoid a repetition of moves. 18 fxe3 c5 19 a4 (Pavlović also gives the line 19 ♕c1 h5 20 ♗d1 cxd4 21 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 22 exd4 h4 23 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 24 ♕d1 ♕g6, when Black is winning) 19...♗f5! 20 e4 ♗g6 21 axb5 axb5 22 dxc5 (this move looks odd) 22...♗xc5+ 23 ♔g2 ♖e7 with excellent compensation for the pawn.

c) 17...♗f5 is by far the most common move, continuing to bother the white queen. White can repeat moves or play 18 ♕c1 *(D)*, and then:

B



c1) Anand gave 18...h5 a '!' in *Informator*, but it has not been repeated since. 19 ♘f3 ♗g4 20 ♘h4 ♖e6 21 ♗d1 f5 22 ♗xg4 hxg4 23 ♗g5 f4 gave Black compensation in Leko-Anand, Cap d'Agde rapid 2003.

c2) 18...h6 is a rather typical move. Black is confident in his long-term compensation and simply takes the g5-square under control. 19 ♘f1 ♗h3 20 ♕d2 ♕f5 21 ♕d1 ♕e4 22 f3 ♕g6 23 ♗xd5 (23 ♗f2 ♘f4!?) 23...cxd5 24 ♕d2 ♖e6 25 a4 bxa4 26 ♖xa4 ♖fe8 gave Black good play in Iordachescu-Vajda, Serbian Team Ch, Budva 2004.

c3) 18...♖e7 19 ♘f3 (rather dry was 19 ♘f1 ♖fe8 20 ♕d2 ♗h3 21 ♗c2 ♗xf1 22 ♖xf1 ♘xe3 23 fxe3 ♖xe3 24 ♗b3 ♖3e7 25 ♖ae1 ½-½ Z.Almasi-Gyimesi, Hungarian Ch, Kazincbarcika 2005) 19...♗g4 20 ♘h4 ♖fe8 21 ♕d2 h6 22 ♕d3 g6 23 ♗d1 ♗h3 (I would prefer 23...♗xd1 24 ♖axd1 ♘xe3 25 fxe3 ♖e4 with clear compensation) 24 ♗f3 g5 25 ♘g2 ♗f5 was rather murky in Anand-Svidler, World Ch, Mexico City 2007.

c4) 18...♖e6 looks very natural. 19 ♘f3 ♗g4 20 ♘g5 ♖g6 21 f3? (almost anything is better than this) 21...♗xf3! 22 ♘xf3 ♗xg3! 23 hxg3 ♖xg3+ 24 ♔f2 ♕h3 25 ♔e2 was Shabalov-Aronian, Calvia Olympiad 2004. Now 25...♖g2+ 26 ♗f2 ♖e8+ 27 ♘e5 ♕f5! 28 ♖f1 ♘f4+ 29 ♕xf4 ♕xf4 intending ...♔h8 and ...f6 is winning for Black.

17...♗f5

Like in the Adams Variation, Black seeks a perpetual attack on the white queen. There are a couple of alternatives:

a) 17...♖e7!? is an interesting idea. After 18 ♘e4 ♖fe8 19 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 20 ♕d3 ♕f6 21 ♗c2 g6 22 ♕d2 ♗h3 23 ♗d3 ♕f3 24 ♗f1 ♗xf1 25 ♖xf1 h5 Black had good compensation in Friedel-Milman, US Chess League (Internet) 2007.

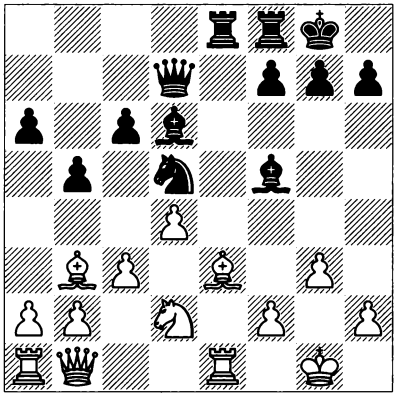
b) 17...f5 was suggested in *New in Chess Yearbook 84*. Pavlović analyses this further:

b1) 18 f3 f4! 19 fxg4 fxe3 20 ♘e4 ♔h8 21 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 22 ♗xd5 cxd5 and Black is certainly OK.

b2) 18 f4 gives Black good long-term compensation after 18...♖f7 19 ♗xd5 cxd5 20 ♕d3 ♖fe7 21 ♘b3 ♗f3 22 ♘c5 ♕c6 23 ♗f2 ♗e4, with counterplay.

b3) 18 ♕d3 looks more testing, but Pavlović finds that Black has enough here as well: 18...f4 19 ♗xd5+ cxd5 20 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 21 gxf4 ♖xf4 22 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 23 ♕e3 ♕f8 24 ♖e1 h6 25 h3 ♗h5 26 ♕e6+ (or 26 ♘f1 ♗g6 27 ♘g3 ♔h7 with compensation) 26...♔h7 27 ♕xd5 ♖xf2 28 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 29 ♘xf1 ♗g6 30 ♕g2 b4 with compensation.

We now return to 17...♗f5 *(D)*:



18 ♗c2

18 ♕c1 transposes to note 'c' to White's 17th move above, while 18 ♕d1 invites a repetition with 18...♗g4.

18...♗xc2 19 ♕xc2 f5 20 c4

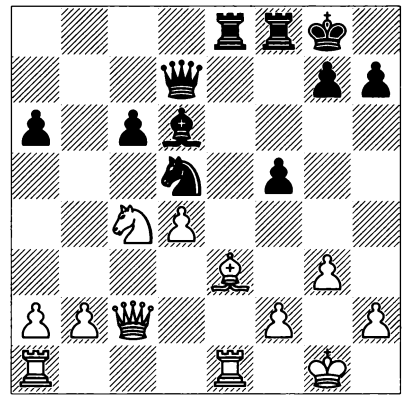
After 20 ♘f3 f4 21 ♘g5 ♘f6 22 ♕b3+ (22 ♗d2 ♕g4! gives Black a strong attack) 22...♘d5 leaves White nothing better than repeating with 23 ♕c2.

20...bxc4!

This is much better than 20...♘f6? 21 ♗g5! ♘g4 22 cxb5 axb5 23 h3 ♘f6 24 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 25 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 26 ♘f3 ± Iordachescu-Brunello, Reggio Emilia 2007. White is a healthy pawn up.

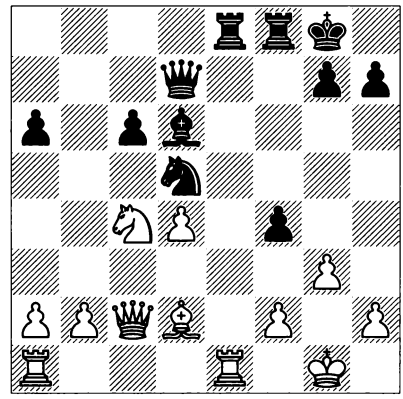
21 ♘xc4 *(D)*

Black also has good chances after 21 ♕xc4 f4.



21...f4 22 ♗d2? *(D)*

This move is the quick choice of most engines, but it is a fatal mistake. The only chance is 22 ♘xd6 fxe3 23 ♘xe8 exf2+ 24 ♕xf2 ♖xf2 25 ♔xf2 ♘e7 26 ♖e4 ♕f5+ (26...♕xe8 27 ♖ae1) 27 ♖f4 ♕h5 28 ♖e1 ♕xh2+ 29 ♔f3 and now 29...♕h5+ 30 ♔g2 ♕xe8 31 ♖fe4 c5 32 ♖xe7 ♕c6+ is given as '∓' by Magomedov, but 33 d5! ♕xd5+ 34 ♔h3 is probably a draw. Black could try 29...♘d5 30 ♘d6 h6!?, which looks like a good winning attempt.



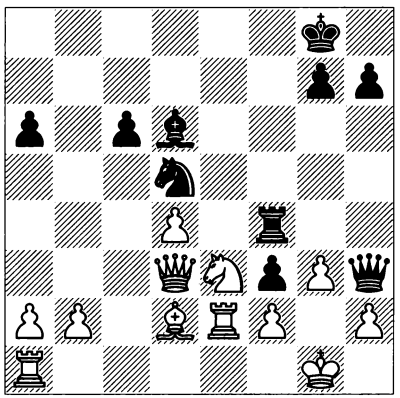
22...f3! 23 ♕d3 ♖e2! 24 ♖xe2

Also losing is 24 ♘e3 ♖xd2 25 ♕xd2 ♕h3! with the idea 26...♘xe3 27 fxe3 f2+.

24...♕h3 25 ♘e3

After 25 ♕xf3 ♖xf3 26 ♘xd6 ♘f6 (intending ...♘g4) 27 ♖ae1 h6 28 ♖e3 ♖xe3 29 ♗xe3 ♘g4 30 ♘c4 ♕xh2+ 31 ♔f1 ♕h1+ 32 ♔e2 ♕h5 Black should win.

25...♖f4! *(D)*

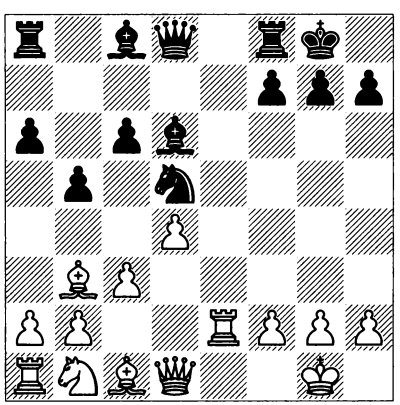


W

0-1 Naiditsch-Gustafsson, European Ch, Dresden 2007. After 26 ♕xa6 (or 26 gxf4 ♗xf4) 26...♖h4! 27 ♕a8+ ♔f7 Black wins.

Section 7.2

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e2 *(D)*



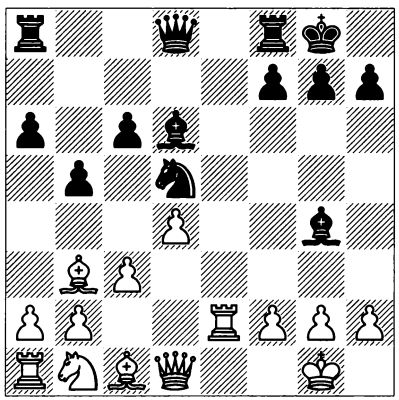
B

Putting the rook on the second rank was a popular plan of defence for a while, but it looks rather clumsy. Here we have:

A: 13...♗g4 125
B: 13...♕h4 126

A)

13...♗g4 *(D)*



W

This is less common than 13...♕h4, but it has been used by many of the world's top players.

14 f3 ♗f5

This is rarer than 14...♗h5, but it may well be stronger. 15 ♗xd5 (15 ♕f1!? may be more challenging; for example, 15...♗g6 16 ♕f2 ♕f6 17 g3 ♗d3 18 ♖e1 ♕g6 19 ♘d2 f5?! 20 f4 ♔h8 21 ♘f3 ♗e4 22 ♘e5 ♗xe5 23 dxe5 ± Kindermann-Nunn, Dortmund 1991) 15...cxd5 16 ♘d2 f5 17 ♕b3 (or 17 ♘f1 f4) and now:

a) 17...♗f7 18 ♘f1 f4 19 ♗d2 ♕d7 20 ♖ae1 a5 gave Black the initiative in Kamsky-Ivanchuk, Linares 1991.

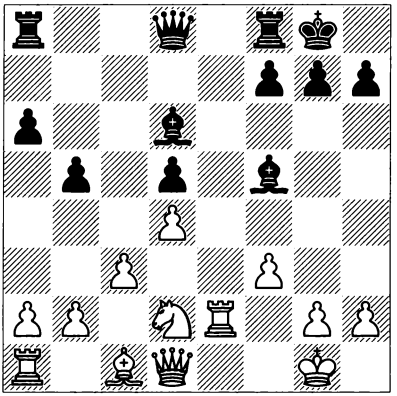
b) 17...♖e8 18 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 19 ♘f1 (not 19 ♕xd5+? ♗f7 20 ♕xd6 ♕e3+ 21 ♔f1 ♖e8 22 g3 ♗c4+ 23 ♔g2 ♕e2+ 24 ♔h3 g5! −+ Nunn) 19...♗f7 20 ♗d2 f4 21 a4 ♖b8 22 axb5 ♖xb5 23 ♕c2 ♗g6 24 ♕c1 ♗d3 25 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 26 ♕xf4 ♖xb2 gave Black adequate play in Kotronias-Nunn, Kavala 1991.

15 ♗xd5

15 g3 ♕c7 16 ♔f2 looks rather odd. 16...♕d7 17 ♗xd5 (White cannot play 17 ♘d2? ♗d3 18 ♖e1 ♕h3 19 ♔g1 because of 19...♗xg3!, when 20 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 21 ♔h1 ♘f4 mates quickly) 17...cxd5 18 ♘d2 ♗d3 19 ♖e3 ♗g6 (already Black can force a draw with 19...♕h3 20 ♔g1 ♗xg3) 20 ♘f1 a5 21 a3 ½-½ Anand-Aronian, World Ch, Mexico City 2007. Black has excellent compensation.

15...cxd5 16 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



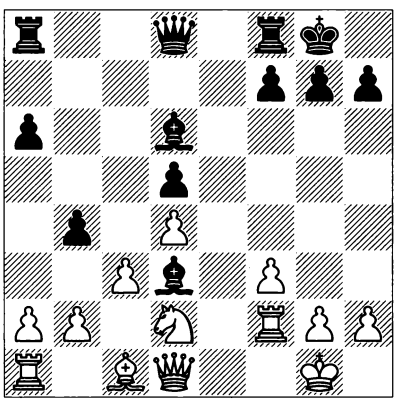
16...♗d3

Or 16...b4 17 ♘f1 (17 cxb4 ♗d3 18 ♖f2 transposes to the main line, and was the move-order of Kotronias-De Vreugt) 17...bxc3 18 bxc3 ♕c7 19 ♖e3 ♖fc8 gave Black plenty of compensation for the pawn in Todorović-Pavlović, Vrnjačka Banja 1990. We shall take the 16...♗d3 move-order as our main line as this makes it easier to cover the deviations.

17 ♖f2 b4 *(D)*

This minority attack is a typical plan when White has exchanged on d5. Instead 17...♕c7?! 18 g3 ♖ae8 19 ♘f1 ♗g6 20 ♘e3 hits the d5-pawn, which was a bit annoying in Ki.Georgiev-Nikolić, Wijk aan Zee 1988.

W



18 cxb4 ♖e8

Also possible is 18...♕c7 19 ♘f1?! (19 g3 ♗c2 20 ♕f1 ♖fc8!? gives Black good compensation after either 21 ♘b3 ♗xb4 or 21 a3 ♕b6) 19...♗xf1 20 ♔xf1 ♗xh2 left White's king too weak in Kotronias-I.Sokolov, Burgas 1992.

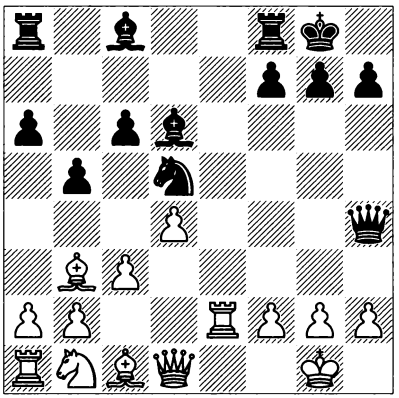
19 ♘f1 ♗xf1 20 ♕xf1 ♕b8 21 g3 ♕xb4

Black had excellent play for the pawn in Kotronias-De Vreugt, Kavala 2002.

B)

13...♕h4 *(D)*

W



This is the traditional move. Black is not convinced that having the rook on e2 is a great improvement to White's position.

14 g3

14 h3?! ♗g4 15 f3 ♗f5 leaves White too weak on the dark squares around his king.

After the text-move (14 g3), Black has a choice between the opportunistic 14...♕h5 and the 'normal' 14...♕h3.

B1: 14...♕h5 126
B2: 14...♕h3 127

B1)

14...♕h5

Black pins the rook and threatens ...♗g4.

15 ♘d2

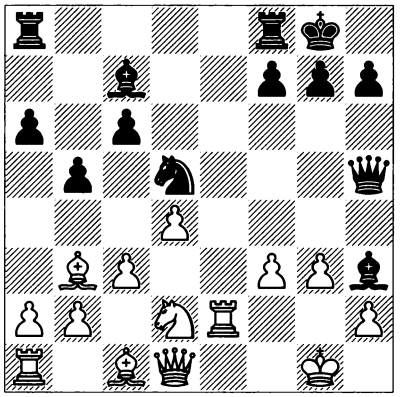
After 15 ♖e4 Black should play 15...♕g6! 16 ♗c2 ♗f5 17 ♖e2 ♖ae8 18 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 19 ♕e1 (19 ♗e3 ♕g6! intending ...f5 is given by Nunn) 19...♘f6 20 ♗e3 ♖e6 21 ♘d2 ♖fe8 22 ♕b1 ♕h5 23 ♕d3 c5 with compensation, Hennigan-Motwani, British Ch, Blackpool 1988.

15...♗h3

15...♗g4 wins back the pawn, but after 16 f3 ♗xf3 17 ♘xf3 ♕xf3 18 ♖f2 or 18 ♕f1 White is a little better with the bishop-pair.

16 f3 ♗c7 *(D)*

Prophylaxis against 17 ♘e4, but White can still play it.



17 a4

17 ♘e4 is a decent alternative. Black has:

a) 17...♖ae8?! 18 ♕d3! leaves White much better after both 18...♖e6 19 ♗d2 ♖g6 20 g4! Beliavsky-Malaniuk, Russian Ch, Minsk 1987 and 18...f5 19 ♘g5 f4 20 ♘xh3 fxg3 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 22 ♔g2 gxh2 23 ♗d2 ± Ehlvest-Geller, Vršac 1987.

b) 17...♕xf3 18 ♘g5 ♕h5 19 ♘xh3 ♕xh3 20 ♗d2 ♖ae8 21 ♕f1 ♕d7 22 ♖ae1 ♖xe2 23 ♕xe2 was Ehlvest-Nikolić, Zagreb Interzonal 1987. White has the bishop-pair, but after Ehlvest's suggested 23...♗d8 with the idea ...♗f6, ...g6 and ...♖d8, Black is very solid.

17...b4 18 c4 ♘f6 19 ♘e4! ♕g6?!

Nunn gives 19...♕xf3 20 ♘g5 ♕h5 21 ♘xh3 ♕xh3 22 ♗g5 ♕f5 23 ♗h4 with the idea ♖f2 as being very bad for Black, but this may be Black's best at this point. After 23...g5!? matters are not so clear: 24 ♖f2 (or 24 ♗c2 ♕g4) 24...♕g6 25 ♗c2 ♕g7. White must at least make sure he does not lose a piece!

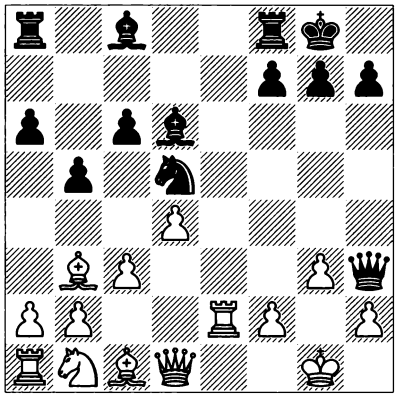
20 ♘f2 ♗f5 21 ♗c2 ♖fe8 22 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 23 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24 ♔g2 ±

Black had nothing for his pawn in Short-Nunn, Brussels 1986, although by playing for activity at all costs, Black managed to win anyway!

B2)

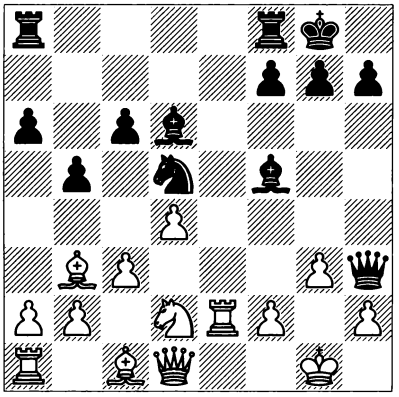
14...♕h3 *(D)*

15 ♘d2



15 ♖e4 transposes to the Modern Variation of Chapter 4, while 15 ♕f1 ♕h5 16 f3 (after 16 ♘d2 Nunn gives 16...♘f4!, while 16...♗f5 and 16...♗h3 are also possible) 16...♗f5 (or 16...♗h3 17 ♕f2 f5) 17 ♕f2 ♕g6 looks like good compensation for the pawn.

15...♗f5 *(D)*



16 a4

White has several options here:

a) 16 ♗xd5 is harmless at best. 16...cxd5 17 f3 ♖ae8 (17...♕h5 18 ♖f2 ♖ae8 19 ♘f1 ♖e6 20 a4 ♖fe8 also looks very good, Nijboer-Peelen, Amsterdam 1984) 18 ♘f1 h5! with compensation, Grünfeld-Pinter, Zagreb Interzonal 1987.

b) 16 ♕f1 ♕h5 and here:

b1) 17 ♗xd5?! cxd5 18 ♕e1 ♗g4 19 ♖e3 f5 20 f4 g5 21 ♘f1 ♖ae8 22 ♖e5 ♗h3 23 ♗e3 ♗xe5 24 dxe5 ♕f3 ∓ Tischbierek-Blatny, Leipzig 1988.

b2) 17 ♗d1 ♕g6 18 ♕g2 ♖ae8 looks OK for Black. Play is similar to the Spassky Variation and Black looks to be doing well.

b3) 17 ♖e1 ♘f4 (this idea is speculative, so 17...♖ae8 is another possibility) 18 gxf4 ♗xf4 19 ♕g2 ♗h3 20 ♕xc6 ♗xh2+ 21 ♔h1 ♗g4 22 ♕g2 ♖ae8 23 ♖xe8 ♗b8+ 24 ♔g1 ♖xe8 25 ♘e4 ♔f8! (avoiding 25...♗f3? 26 ♘f6+) gave Black good play in M.Schlosser-Adams, Oakham 1990.

c) 16 ♘e4 ♗g4 and now:

c1) 17 ♘xd6? is bad in view of 17...♕h5! 18 ♔f1 (18 f3 ♗xf3 19 ♔f2 ♖ad8 20 ♘e4 ♖de8 −+) 18...♕xh2 19 ♔e1 ♕h1+ 20 ♔d2 ♕h6+ 21 ♔c2 ♕xd6 −+ Zuckerman-Pavlović, New York Open 1987.

c2) 17 ♕f1 ♕xf1+ 18 ♔xf1 ♖ae8 19 ♘xd6 ♗xe2+ 20 ♔g2 ♖e6 is a little better for Black.

c3) 17 ♘g5 is best. After 17...♗xe2 18 ♕xe2 ♕d7 19 ♕d3 White had enough compensation in Geller-Lukacs, Coimbatore 1987. Here 19...g6 looks best.

d) 16 ♗c2 ♗xc2 17 ♕xc2 f5 18 c4 (18 f4 is well met by 18...♗xf4!, when 19 gxf4? loses to 19...♕g4+ and now 20 ♔f2 ♘xf4 or 20 ♖g2 ♕xg2+ 21 ♔xg2 ♘e3+) 18...♕g4 and here:

d1) 19 ♖e1 f4 20 f3 ♕h3 21 cxd5 (21 ♘e4 can be met by 21...♘b4) 21...fxg3 22 ♘f1? (22 ♘e4) 22...gxh2+ 23 ♔h1 (Mokry-Panczyk, Polanica Zdroj 1984) 23...♗b4! ∓.

d2) 19 ♖e6 and now:

d21) 19...♘f4 leads to a draw: 20 f3 (20 ♖xd6? ♖ae8 21 cxb5 ♖e2 22 ♕c4+ ♔h8 23 ♕xe2 ♘xe2+ 24 ♔g2 f4 25 bxc6 fxg3 26 hxg3 ♘f4+ 0-1 Ljubojević-Nunn, Szirak Interzonal 1987) 20...♘h3+ 21 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 22 ♔g1 ♘h3+ 23 ♔g2 ♘f4+ ½-½ Hübner-Timman, Tilburg 1987.

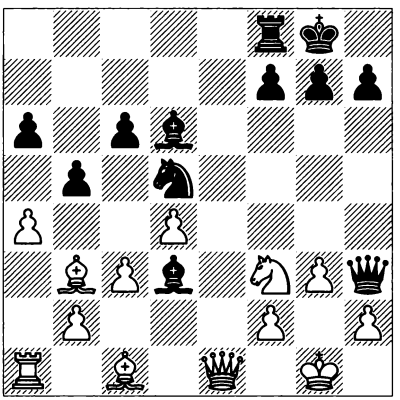
d22) 19...f4! is given by Nunn. 20 ♕e4 (White loses quickly after both 20 cxd5? fxg3 21 hxg3 ♗xg3 22 f3 ♕xd4+ and 20 ♖xd6? fxg3 21 hxg3 {21 fxg3 ♘e3} 21...♖xf2!) 20...♘e3! 21 ♘f3 (bad are 21 fxe3? ♕d1+ 22 ♔g2 fxg3 23 hxg3 ♕e2+ 24 ♔h3 ♖f2 and 21 ♘f1? ♘xf1 22 ♔xf1 ♕h3+ 23 ♔g1 fxg3 24 hxg3 ♗xg3 −+) 21...fxg3 22 ♕xg4 gxf2+ (22...gxh2+! looks even better: 23 ♘xh2 ♗xh2+ 24 ♔xh2 ♘xg4+ 25 ♔g3 ♘xf2 ∓) 23 ♔xf2 ♘xg4+ 24 ♔g2 ♖f6 (Nunn) is only a tiny bit better for Black.

16...♗d3

Also possible is 16...♖ae8 17 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 18 ♘f1 h5 19 ♗xd5 (19 axb5?! axb5 20 ♖a6 is worse because of 20...♘c7! 21 ♖a7 {not 21 ♖xc6? ♗e4} 21...h4 22 ♘e3? hxg3 23 fxg3 ♗xg3 24 hxg3 ♖xe3 25 ♗xe3 ♕xg3+ 26 ♔f1 ♗h3+ 27 ♔e2 ♗g4+, de Firmian-Adams, New York 1996) 19...cxd5 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♘e3, as in Sax-Nunn, Brussels 1988. White is somewhat better because his position is very solid and he has counterplay against Black's pawns on b5 and d5.

17 ♖e1 ♖ae8 18 ♘f3 ♖xe1+ 19 ♕xe1 *(D)*

B



Black is active, but it is not easy to improve his position.

19...h6 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♘e5

White could also try 21 ♕d1 ♗e4 22 ♗c2, when Black must still prove that he has enough for the pawn.

21...♖e8 22 ♕d1 ♗xe5 23 dxe5 ♕f5

Black has sufficient activity for the pawn. 24 ♗xd5 (after 24 f4 Black can play either 24...h5 or 24...♕e4) 24...cxd5 25 g4 ♕g6 26 ♗f4 ♕e4 27 h3 h5 28 ♗g3 ♗e2 29 ♕d4 ½-½ Anand-Khalifman, Reggio Emilia 1991.

Section 7.3

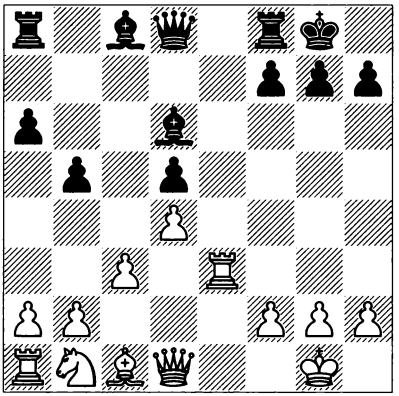
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 ♗xd5 cxd5 13 d4 ♗d6 14 ♖e3 *(D)*

This is often referred to as the Kevitz Variation. Instead 14 ♖e1 ♕h4 15 g3 ♕h3 is considered in Section 7.5 by way of the move-order 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗xd5 cxd5.

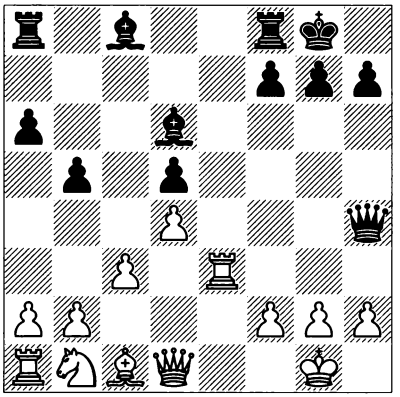
14...♕h4

14...f5?! looks insufficient after 15 ♘d2 f4 16 ♖e1, as it is not so easy for Black to attack

B



W



in this position. His far-advanced f-pawn cuts off his own dark-squared bishop. Black has tried:

a) 16...♖a7 17 ♘f3 ♗g4 (17...g5 18 ♘e5 ♖g7 19 a4 ±) 18 h3 ♗h5 19 a4 ±.

b) 16...♕f6 looks insufficient after 17 ♕b3 ♕f5 (or 17...♗e6 18 ♘f3 ±) 18 ♘e4 (18 ♘f3) 18...♗c7 19 f3 with the idea 20 ♘f2. Black does not have enough.

c) 16...f3 is the most direct, but it does not really work. 17 ♘xf3 ♗g4 18 ♖e3 ♗f4 (or 18...♖a7 19 h3 ♗h5 20 g4 ♗g6 21 ♘e5 ♗xe5 22 dxe5 ±) 19 ♖d3 ♗c7 (19...♗f5 20 ♗xf4 ♗xd3 fails to the zwischenzug 21 ♗g5) 20 h3 ♗h5 21 ♗g5! ♕d6 (21...♗xf3 22 ♗xd8 ♗xd1 23 ♗xc7) 22 g4 ♗g6 23 ♖e3 ♗e4 24 ♘e5 ±.

d) 16...♕g5 17 ♘f3 ♕h5 18 ♘e5! (worse is 18 ♕b3 ♔h8 19 ♘e5 ♗e6 20 f3 ♖f6 21 ♖e2 ♖af8 – Nunn) 18...f3 19 gxf3! (this is much better than 19 ♘xf3? ♗g4 ∓ or 19 ♖e3 ♗xe5 20 ♖xe5 ♕g4 21 ♖g5 ♕e4 with compensation). Black may have some practical chances but objectively White should be much better.

However, the rarer 14...♕c7 is playable: 15 h3 ♗f5 16 ♘d2 and now 16...♗h2+! is a clever move, whose point will become apparent with Black's 20th and 21st moves. 17 ♔h1 ♗f4 18 ♖e1 ♖ae8 gives Black compensation for the pawn; e.g., 19 ♘f1 (19 ♘f3 ♗d6 20 ♗e3 ♕d7 21 ♘g1 ♖e6 22 ♕d2 ♖fe8 with compensation) 19...♗d6! 20 ♗g5 ♕d7! 21 ♕d2 ♗xh3! 22 gxh3 ♕xh3+ 23 ♔g1 ♕g4+ 24 ♘g3 h6 25 ♗e3?! (25 ♗xh6!?) 25...♗xg3 26 fxg3 ♕xg3+ 27 ♔h1 (27 ♔f1 ♖e6 –+) 27...♕h3+ 28 ♕h2 ♖xe3 –+ Mithrakanth-Yurtaev, Calcutta 2000.

Now back to 14...♕h4 *(D)*.

15 h3

15 g3 is inconsistent. After 15...♗g4!? (the less forcing 15...♕h3 16 ♘d2 ♗g4 also offers Black adequate play) 16 f3 (bad is 16 ♕f1? ♕h5 17 ♘d2 f5 18 f4 ♖fe8 19 ♘b3 ♗h3 20 ♕e1 ♗xf4 –+, while 16 gxh4 ♗xd1 gives Black obvious compensation in the endgame) 16...♗xg3 (this should lead to a draw) 17 ♕e2 (17 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 18 ♔f1?! ♗h3+ 19 ♔e2 ♕g2+ 20 ♔e1 ♖ae8 21 ♕e2 ♕h1+ 22 ♔d2 ♗f1 23 ♕f2 ♖xe3 24 ♕xe3 h5 ∓ Nunn) 17...♗f4 18 fxg4 f5! 19 gxf5 (19 ♖h3?! ♕xh3 20 ♗xf4 fxg4 21 ♗e5 ♖f3 22 ♘d2 ♖e3 23 ♕f1 ♖f8 24 ♕xh3 gxh3 ∓) 19...♖xf5 20 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 21 ♕xe8+ ♖f8 22 ♕e6+ ♔h8 23 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 is a draw. Black will deliver perpetual check after 24 ♕e2 or 24 ♕e1.

15...♕f4

This is the soundest approach. Black can also try to attack with his kingside pawns:

a) 15...f5?! looks natural, but Black has experienced difficulties:

a1) 16 ♘d2 f4 17 ♖e1 (17 ♘f3?! ♕h5 18 ♖e1 ♗xh3 19 gxh3 ♕xh3 20 ♖e5? ♖ae8 21 ♖g5 ♖f6 22 ♖g2 ♖h6 23 ♘h2 f3 0-1 Ernst-Kling, corr. 1987) 17...♗xh3!? 18 ♕f3 ♗xg2 19 ♕xg2 ♕h5 20 ♘f3 ♖f6 was an interesting, though speculative, approach in de Firmian-I.Sokolov, Biel 1989.

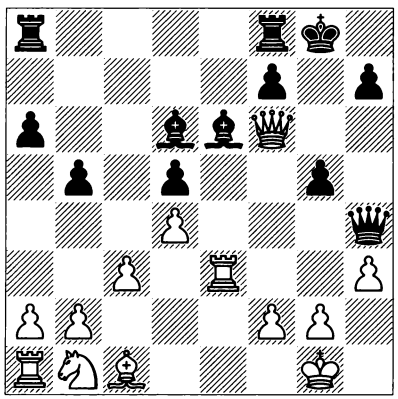
a2) 16 ♕b3 ♗b7 17 ♘d2 f4 18 ♘f3 ♕h5 19 ♖e1 (19 ♖e6? ♖ad8 20 ♖e1 ♗c8 21 ♘e5 ♗xe5 22 ♖xe5 ♕g6 23 ♔h2 f3 gives Black good attacking chances) 19...♖f6 20 a4 ♖g6 21 ♔h1 ♖f8 22 axb5 (22 ♕d1? ♗c8 –+) 22...♗c8 23 ♖e5 ♗xe5 24 ♕xd5+ ♗e6 25 ♕xe5 ♖f5 26 ♕b8+! (else ....♗d5) 26...♖f8 27 ♕e5 repeats.

a3) 16 ♕f3! ♗b7 17 ♘d2 g5 18 ♕e2! f4 (18...g4 also looks insufficient after 19 ♖e6 ♖ad8 20 ♘f1 gxh3 21 g3! ♕g4 22 ♗h6 ♕xe2

23 ♖xe2 ♖fe8 24 ♖ae1 ±) 19 ♘f3 ♕h5 20 ♘xg5! ♕g6 (20...♕xg5 21 ♖g3) 21 ♖e6 ♕xg5 22 ♖xd6 ♖ae8 23 ♖e6 ♔f7 24 ♖e5 +– Hübner-Nunn, World Cup, Skellefteå 1989.

b) 15...g5 seems cruder, but it is playable. 16 ♕f3 (after 16 ♘d2 g4 17 ♘f1 both 17...♔h8 18 hxg4 ♗xg4 and 17...gxh3 18 g3 ♕g4 19 ♕xg4+ ♗xg4, as in Stolz-Van den Doel, Bundesliga 2000/1, give Black enough play) 16...♗e6 17 ♕f6 *(D)* and now:

B



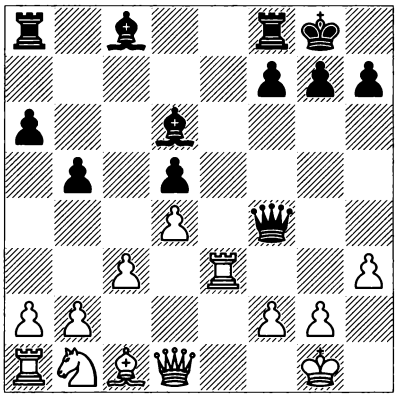
b1) 17...♕h5?! 18 ♘d2 g4 19 ♖xe6! fxe6 20 ♕xe6+ ♕f7 21 ♕xd6 ♕xf2+ 22 ♔h2 ♖ae8 23 ♕g3 was given as ± by Tal, but this looks more like ±. In any case, Black should steer clear of this line.

b2) 17...♖ae8?! 18 ♘a3 ♕h5 19 ♗d2 h6 (19...♗f4 20 ♖d3 ♗xd2 21 ♖xd2 ♗xh3? 22 gxh3 ♕xh3 23 ♕xg5+ ♔h8 24 ♕f6+ ♔g8 25 ♖d3 ♕xd3 26 ♔h2 +– wins for White, but this does not work with the rook on a8 instead of f8!) 20 ♘c2 ♗f4 21 ♖d3 ♕e2 22 ♗xf4 gxf4 23 ♘e1 ♕xb2 24 ♖ad1 ♔h7 25 ♕xf4 ♕xa2 26 ♖e3 ♖c8 27 ♘d3 ♕c2 28 ♖a1 ♕xc3 29 ♖xa6 ± Hübner-Pinter, Solingen 1989.

b3) 17...♖fe8! 18 ♘a3 (18 ♘d2 ♕f4 19 ♕xf4 ♗xf4 20 ♖e1 ♗xh3 21 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22 ♘f3 ♗xc1 23 ♖xc1 {this actually came about from 17...♖ae8} 23...♗f5 24 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 25 ♘xe1 f6 = Brkić-Naiditsch, European Ch, Kusadasi 2006) 18...♕h5 19 ♗d2 ♗e7 20 ♕f3 (or 20 ♕e5 ♖ad8 21 f4 ♕g6 22 fxg5 ♗f5 23 ♕g3 ♗e4 24 ♖f1 ♗d6 25 ♕h4 ♖e6 26 ♖e2 ♖de8 27 ♖fe1 f6 28 ♖f2 ♗e7 29 gxf6 ♖xf6 30 ♖ee2 ♖xf2 31 ♕xf2 ♖f8 with compensation, Wolff-Hellers, New York Open 1990) 20...♕g6 21 ♖ae1 g4 22 ♕g3 gxh3 23 gxh3 ♗d6! 24 ♕xg6+ hxg6 with compensation, Hübner-Nunn, European Team Ch, Haifa 1989.

We now return to 15...♕f4 *(D)*:

W



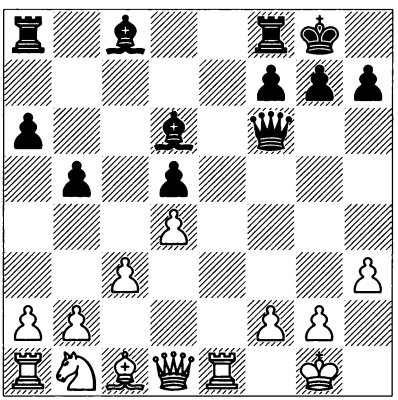
16 ♖e5

The time-wasting 16 ♖g3?! is bad: 16...♕f5 (also good is 16...♕f6 17 ♖f3 ♕g6 18 ♕d3 ♖e8 19 ♗d2 ♖e4 20 ♘a3 ♗f5 21 ♕f1 ♖h4! ∓ Boudy-Am.Rodriguez, Capablanca Memorial, Cienfuegos 1983) 17 ♖f3 ♕h5 18 ♕d3 ♗g4! 19 ♖e3 ♖ae8 20 ♘a3 ♗f5 21 ♕f1 ♕g6 ∓ Barcenilla-Van Gisbergen, World Junior Ch, Mamaia 1991.

16...♕f6 17 ♖e1 *(D)*

17 ♖xd5?! ♗b7 18 ♖g5 ♖fe8 gives Black a strong attack, while White can offer a repetition with 17 ♖e3 ♕f4 18 ♖e5 ♕f6 19 ♖e3. Black can decline to repeat, but there are risks: 19...♕g6 20 ♘d2 f5 21 ♕f3 f4 22 ♖e1 (22 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 23 ♖e5! ♗xe5 24 ♕xa8 looks critical) 22...♔h8 23 ♘b3 ♗f5 24 ♗d2 h5! with compensation, Gufeld-Blatny, Honolulu 1996.

B



17...♕g6 18 ♕f3

18 ♔h1 ♗f5 (18...♗e6!? is interesting) 19 ♗e3 ♗c2 (19...♗e4 20 ♕g4 ♕xg4 21 hxg4 f5 would be similar) 20 ♕g4 ♕xg4 21 hxg4 f5 22 gxf5 ♖xf5 gave Black enough counterplay in Van der Wiel-Nunn, Amsterdam 1990.

18...♗e6

18...♗f5?! 19 ♗e3 ♖ae8 20 ♘d2 leaves Black without an effective follow-up, but 18...♗d7!? deserves attention. White has:

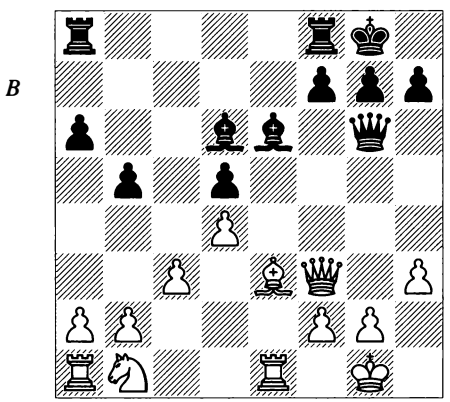
a) 19 ♕xd5?! is too risky after either 19...♗c6 20 ♕g5 ♖ae8 intending ...♕c2 or 19...♖ae8 20 ♖f1 (20 ♗e3 ♗c6 −+) 20...♗f5 21 ♘d2 (21 ♗e3 ♖xe3 22 fxe3 ♗e4 −+) 21...♗d3 22 g3 ♗xf1 23 ♘xf1 ♖e1 24 ♕g2 ♕c2 and Black is winning.

b) 19 ♗f4 ♖ae8 20 ♘d2 (20 ♗e5 ♖e7 21 ♘d2 ♖fe8 22 ♘b3 ♗c6) 20...♗xf4 21 ♕xf4 ♗xh3 22 ♕g3 ♖xe1+ 23 ♖xe1 ♕c2 24 ♘b3 ♗e6 is equal – Pavlović.

c) 19 ♗e3 ♖ae8 20 ♘d2 ♖e6 21 ♔h1 ♗b8 22 ♘b3 ♖f6 23 ♕e2? ♗xh3! 24 f4 (24 gxh3 ♕e4+ 25 f3 ♖xf3 −+) 24...♗xg2+ 25 ♕xg2 ♕h5+ 26 ♕h2 ♕f3+ 27 ♕g2 ♖h6+ 28 ♔g1 ♖g6 0-1 A.Graf-Gustafsson, German Ch, Altenkirchen 2005.

19 ♗e3 *(D)*

Harmless is 19 ♗f4 ♗xf4 20 ♕xf4 ♗xh3 21 ♕g3 ♕c2! (21...♕xg3 22 fxg3 ♗f5 23 ♘d2 ♖fe8 is also satisfactory) 22 c4 ♗e6! (better than 22...♕xb2 23 ♘c3) 23 cxd5 ♗xd5 24 ♘c3 ♖ad8 and Black has no problems.



B

19...♕c2

This is certainly good enough, but Black can also play 19...♖ac8 20 ♘d2 b4 21 cxb4 ♗xb4 22 a3 ♗d6 23 ♖ac1 ♖c2 24 b4 ♖xc1 25 ♖xc1 ♕d3 with compensation, J.Polgar-Z.Almasi, FIDE Knockout, Groningen 1997.

20 ♕e2 ♕g6 21 ♔h1

21 ♕f3 ♕c2 22 ♕e2 ♕g6 23 ♕f3 was drawn in J.Polgar-Shirov, Cap d'Agde rapid 2003 and others.

21...♖fc8

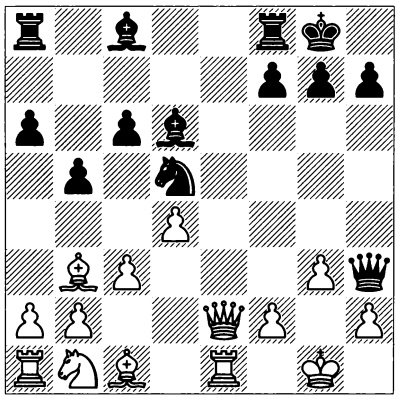
Playing for a minority attack. Another idea is 21...♖ae8 intending a quick ...f5.

22 a3 a5 23 ♘d2 b4 24 axb4 axb4 25 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 26 ♘b3 bxc3 27 bxc3 ♖a3 28 ♘c5

½-½ de Firmian-Sargisian, Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 2007.

Section 7.4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♕e2 *(D)*



B

This is a relatively new try which has been popular lately. It is amazing that there can be such fertile ground at such an early stage in a well-analysed opening like the Marshall Attack! White hopes to exchange or drive the black queen away as quickly as possible by playing ♕f1. We examine:

A: 15...♗g4 131
B: 15...♗d7 132

A)

15...♗g4

Black continues in the normal fashion.

16 ♕f1 ♕h5

This is sharper than 16...♖ae8 17 ♖xe8 ♕xf1+ 18 ♔xf1 ♖xe8 19 ♗d2 ♗f5 20 a4 (certainly better than 20 ♘a3?!, when 20...♗d3+ 21 ♔g2 ♖e2 22 ♖d1 ♗xa3 23 bxa3 ♗e4+ 24 ♔f1 ♗d3 was soon drawn in C.Balogh-Z.Almasi, Hungarian Ch, Nyiregyhaza 2008, and Mikhalevski's suggestion 20...♗h3+ 21 ♔g1 ♖e2 22 ♖d1 ♘f6 23 ♘c2 ♗g4 is probably even better) 20...h6 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♗d1! g5 23 ♘a3, which left White a little better in Volokitin-Inarkiev, European Ch, Budva 2009.

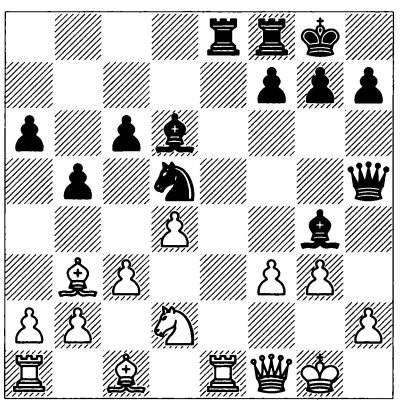
17 ♘d2

17 ♗e3 ♖ae8 18 ♘d2 ♖e6 19 f3 is Kramnik's line in Section 3.4.

17...♖ae8 18 f3 *(D)*

After 18 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 19 f3, 19...♗f5?! 20 ♘e4! ♗c7 (20...♗xe4 21 fxe4 ♖xe4 loses to 22 ♗d1! ♕g6 23 ♗c2) 21 ♗d2 ♕g6 22 ♖e1 ♗xe4 23 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 24 ♗c2 f5 25 fxe4 fxe4 26 ♕g2 was better for White in Svidler-Leko, World Ch, Mexico City 2007. Black should prefer 19...♗h3! 20 ♕f2 ♗f5, because 21 ♘e4? can simply be met by 21...♗xe4 22 fxe4 ♖xe4 because 23 ♗d1 is not possible.

B



18...f5!?

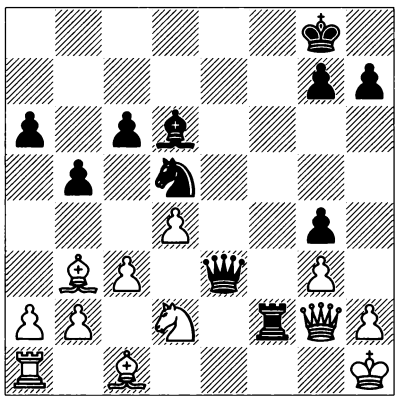
A sharp try. Black has also played:

a) 18...♗h3 19 ♕f2 ♖xe1+ (Black may be better off with 19...f5 20 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 21 c4 ♘f4!, which was unclear in Kapengut-Malaniuk, Minsk 1985) 20 ♕xe1 ♘f6 21 ♕f2 ♖e8 22 ♘f1 ♕g6 23 ♗d2 h5 24 ♖e1 ♖xe1 25 ♗xe1 was Motylev-Vajda, Romanian Team Ch, Predeal 2007. White has managed to exchange all of the rooks and still has an extra pawn.

b) 18...♖xe1 19 ♕xe1 ♗xf3 20 ♘xf3 ♕xf3 21 ♗d2 h5 (21...♕g4 22 ♕d1 was not much of an improvement in Volokitin-Kurnosov, European Ch, Dagomys 2008) 22 ♕d1 ♕f5 23 ♗c2 ♕h3 24 ♕f3 ± Caruana-Negi, Wijk aan Zee 2008. White's bishop-pair gives him a certain initiative.

19 fxg4 fxg4 20 ♖xe8 ♕xe8 21 ♕g2 ♕e3+ 22 ♔h1 ♖f2 *(D)*

W



23 ♕g1

Mikhalevski suggests 23 ♗xd5+! cxd5 24 ♘f1 ♕e2 25 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 26 ♗e3! ♖xf1+ 27 ♖xf1 ♕xf1+ 28 ♗g1 ±.

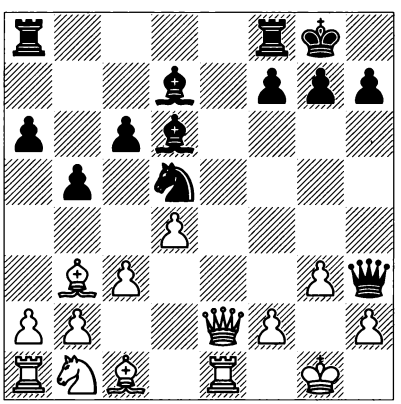
23...♗xg3! 24 ♕xg3 ♕e2! 25 ♕g1 ♔h8! 26 ♗d1 ♖xh2+ 27 ♕xh2 ♕e1+

½-½ So-Gupta, Wijk aan Zee 2009.

B)

15...♗d7 *(D)*

W



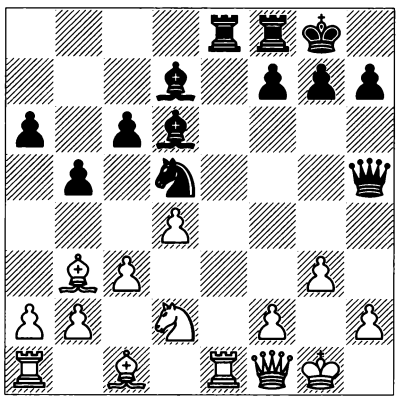
Instead of attacking the white queen, which intended to move anyway, Black focuses on seizing the e-file.

16 ♕f1 ♕f5!?

This is Black's latest try, and we shall take it as the main line because it was Aronian's choice. Other moves have been seen more frequently:

a) 16...♕h5 is popular. 17 ♘d2 ♖ae8 *(D)* and here:

W

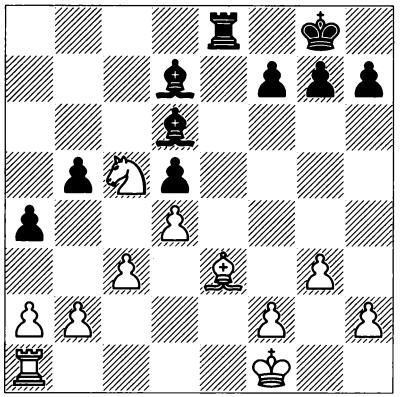


a1) 18 f3 ♘f4 19 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 20 ♘e4 ♘h3+ 21 ♔g2 (not 21 ♔h1? ♗xg3 22 hxg3 ♘g5+ 23 ♔g1 ♘xf3+ 24 ♔f2 ♖xe4 25 ♗d1 ♗g4 and Black wins) 21...♘f4+ 22 ♔g1 ♘h3+ 23 ♔g2 ½-½ Kasimdzhanov-Bacrot, French Team Ch, Noyon 2008.

a2) 18 ♘e4 ♗h3 19 ♗d1 (not 19 ♕e2 ♕xe2 20 ♖xe2 f5) 19...♕f5 20 ♕d3 ♕g6 (this is better than 20...♕e6 21 ♖e2 ♗f5 22 f3 h5 23 ♗g5 ♕g6 24 ♕d2 ♗c7 25 ♗c2 f6 26 ♗h4 ♖e6 27 ♖ae1 ♖fe8? 28 ♘xf6+!, as in Volokitin-Gustafsson, Bundesliga 2008/9) 21 ♗d2 ♗f5 22 ♗f3 ♗f4! 23 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 24 ♕d2 ♘h3+ 25 ♔g2 ♖xe4 26 ♗xe4 ♗xe4+ 27 ♖xe4 ♕xe4+ 28 ♔xh3 ♖e8 gave Black enough compensation in Volokitin-Fressinet, European Team Ch, Khersonisos 2007 and the game was soon drawn.

b) 16...♖ae8 heads for an endgame. 17 ♖xe8 ♕xf1+ 18 ♔xf1 ♖xe8 19 ♗d2 ♘b6 20 ♗e3 ♘d5 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 ♘d2 a5 23 ♘b3 a4 24 ♘c5 *(D)* and now:

B



b1) 24...♗h3+ 25 ♔e2 ♖a8?! 26 ♗f4 ♗e7 27 ♔d2 g5 28 ♗c7 ♖c8 29 ♗b6 ♖c6 30 ♖e1! ♗f8 31 ♗d8 ♗xc5 32 dxc5 ♖xc5 33 ♗e7 ♖c4 34 ♗xg5 d4 35 ♗h6 f6 36 ♖e7 and White kept pressing in Kamsky-Bacrot, FIDE Grand Prix, Nalchik 2009.

b2) 24...♗f5 25 ♔e2 f6 26 ♔d2 g5 27 b3 a3 28 b4 ♔f7 29 ♘d3 ♔g6 30 ♖b1 h5 with compensation, Caruana-Sargisian, Merida 2008.

17 ♗e3

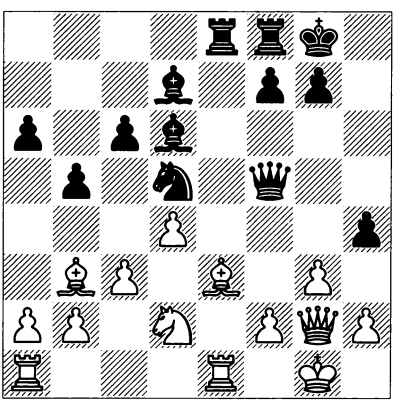
Black holds the balance after 17 ♘d2 ♖ae8 18 f3 ♘f6 19 a4 c5 20 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 21 ♘e4 ♖xe4!; e.g., 22 fxe4 (22 ♗c2 cxd4! 23 fxe4 ♕c5! gave Black enough play in Svidler-Grischuk, Russian Ch, Moscow 2009) 22...♕xe4 23 ♗f4!? ♗c6! 24 d5! c4! 25 ♗xd6 ♕xd5 26 ♗d1 ♕h1+ 27 ♔f2 ♕xh2+ 28 ♔e1 ♕xb2! 29 ♖a3 ♘e4 30 ♕f4 ♕g2 31 ♗e2 ♕g1+ 32 ♗f1 g5 33 ♕f3 ♘d2!? 34 ♕xc6 ♕xf1+ 35 ♔xd2 ♕f2+ 36 ♔c1 ♕e1+ ½-½ L.Dominguez-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

17...♖ae8 18 ♘d2 h5

Here is one point of Black's 15th move – he can bring another unit into play. This looks good enough, but Black could also try 18...♖e7.

19 ♕g2 h4 *(D)*

W



20 ♕f3

Other moves:

a) 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 ♕f3 hxg3 22 hxg3 ♕xf3 23 ♘xf3 f6 24 ♗f4 ♗e7 25 ♗c7 ♔f7 and Black held the endgame without much difficulty

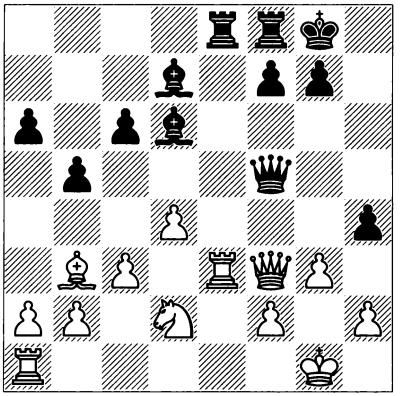
in Balogh-Hraček, European Team Ch, Novi Sad 2009.

b) 20 ♖ac1 looks rather odd. Then 20...♕h5 21 ♘e4 ♗b8 22 ♗d2 ♗g4 23 ♘g5 h3 24 ♕f1 ♖xe1 25 ♖xe1 f6 26 ♘e6 ♖e8 27 ♘c5 ♖e2 28 ♗c1?! ♗xg3! was good for Black in Banikas-Melkumyan, Kavala 2009, but 20...hxg3 21 hxg3 ♘xe3 22 ♖xe3 (22 fxe3 ♕g6) 22...♖xe3 23 fxe3 ♕g5 24 ♘f1 c5, with compensation, looks simpler.

20...♘xe3 21 ♖xe3 *(D)*

21 fxe3 hxg3 22 hxg3 ♕g6!? gives Black good play for the pawn.

B



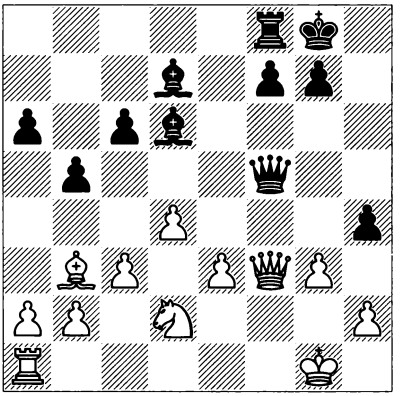
21...♖xe3

It would be simpler to play 21...♕xf3 22 ♘xf3 hxg3 23 hxg3 ♖xe3 24 fxe3 ♗xg3.

22 fxe3 *(D)*

22 ♕xe3 ♖e8 23 ♕f3 and now the natural 23...♕xf3 24 ♘xf3 hxg3 25 hxg3 ♖e2 26 ♘g5 ♗e8? (26...♖xb2! is necessary) runs into 27 ♔f1 ♖xb2 28 ♖e1!. Instead Black could try 23...c5 with counterplay.

B

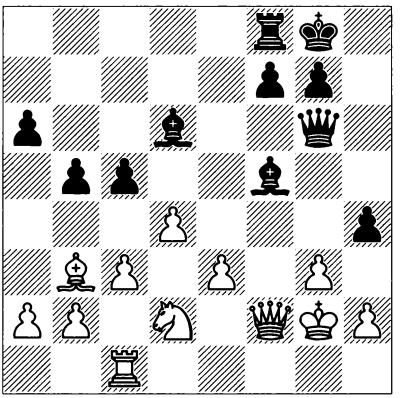


22...♕g6 23 ♔g2 ♗g4 24 ♕f2 c5 25 ♖c1

After 25 e4 cxd4 26 cxd4 ♗b4 Black gets serious counterplay.

25...♗f5 *(D)*

W



Black has excellent play so White hurries to simplify the position.

26 e4 ♗xe4+ 27 ♘xe4 ♕xe4+ 28 ♕f3 ♕xf3+ 29 ♔xf3 hxg3 30 hxg3 ♖e8

= Alekseev-Aronian, FIDE Grand Prix, Nalchik 2009.

Section 7.5

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗xd5

As we have seen, White may play this capture at almost any time, but here it is played immediately because White wants to attack the d5-pawn. Instead 15 ♗e3 is the Main Line of the first three chapters, while 15 ♖e4 is the Modern Variation of Chapter 4. Here we shall consider other 15th moves as well:

a) 15 ♘d2? is bad: 15...♗g4 16 ♘f3 (the alternative 16 f3 ♗xg3 17 hxg3 ♕xg3+ 18 ♔h1 ♘f4 also wins for Black) 16...♕h5 17 ♔g2 ♖ae8 18 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 19 ♗d2 ♖e6 is winning for Black.

b) 15 ♕f3?! ♗g4 16 ♕g2 ♕h5 17 ♗e3 (even worse are 17 ♘d2?! ♖ae8 ∓ and 17 ♗xd5?! cxd5 18 ♗e3 ♗f3 19 ♕f1 f5 20 ♘d2 f4 ∓) 17...♗f3 18 ♕f1 f5 19 ♘d2 f4 20 ♘xf3 fxe3 21 ♗d1 and here Nunn's suggestion 21...♖ae8! looks stronger than 21...♖xf3 22 ♗xf3 ♕xf3 23

fxe3, which was unclear in Normoyle-Hebden, Irish Ch, Dublin 2007.

c) 15 ♕d3 and then:

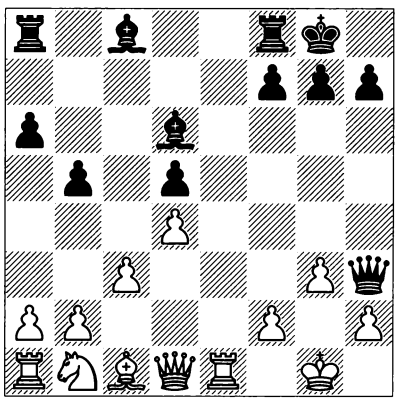
c1) 15...♗g4 16 ♕f1 transposes to Section 7.4.

c2) 15...♘f6 16 ♕f1 ♕f5 17 ♗e3 ♗b7 intending ...c5 looks like a reasonable try.

c3) 15...♗f5 16 ♕f1 ♕h5 17 ♗e3 ♗h3 (17...♖ae8 18 ♘d2 transposes to 18 ♕f1 from Chapter 3) 18 ♗d1 (18 ♕e2 ♗g4) 18...♕f5 19 ♕e2 ♖ae8 20 ♘d2 c5 could use some tests. Play is similar to the Spassky Variation.

15...cxd5 *(D)*

W



This position is important because, as mentioned before, it may also arise via the move-order 12 ♗xd5 cxd5 13 d4 ♗d6 14 ♖e1 ♕h4 15 g3 ♕h3.

16 ♕f3 ♗f5! *(D)*

This is considered much better than 16...♗g4 17 ♕xd5, when after 17...♖ae8?! 18 ♗e3 Black will have trouble mustering enough play for the two pawns. Black could try 17...♖ad8, with the idea 18 ♕g2 (this is the most natural move, but may not be best) 18...♕h5 19 ♗e3 ♗f3 20 ♕f1 f5 21 ♘d2 f4 with serious counterplay.

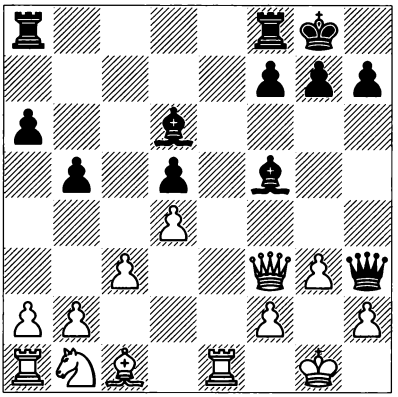
17 ♕xd5

This greedy move forces Black to play vigorously. Other moves give him more choice:

a) 17 ♕g2 ♕h5 18 ♕xd5 (after 18 f3 ♖ae8 19 ♗e3 ♗h3 20 ♕f2 Black could try 20...f5 or 20...♕g6!?) 18...♖ad8 (18...♖fe8, as tried once by Topalov, is also interesting) 19 ♕c6 (19 ♕g2 ♖fe8 gives Black a strong initiative) 19...♗e6 20 ♕e4 and now:

a1) 20...♗d5 21 ♕e2 ♗f3 22 ♕f1 f5 (Black can consider 22...♖de8!?) 23 ♘d2 ♗d5 24 f3

W

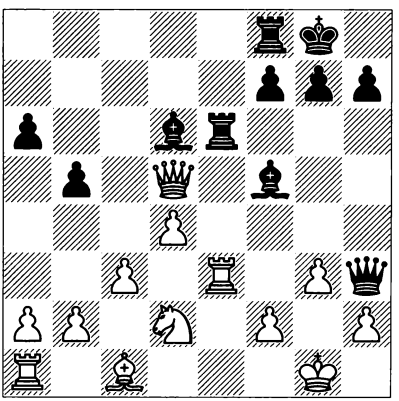


♖de8 gives Black some compensation, but White can fight back with 25 a4.

a2) 20...♖de8 21 ♕e2 and now 21...♕d5 22 ♗e3 (22 ♕f1? ♗h3) 22...♗h3 23 f3 f5 is given by Nunn, while the surprising 21...♗d5!? is also possible; for example, 22 ♗e3 ♗f3 23 ♕f1 f5 with good play.

b) 17 ♘d2 ♖ae8 18 ♖e3 ♖e6 (18...♖xe3!? is also possible, with the idea 19 fxe3 ♖e8 or 19 ♕xe3 ♗d7) 19 ♕xd5 *(D)* and here:

B



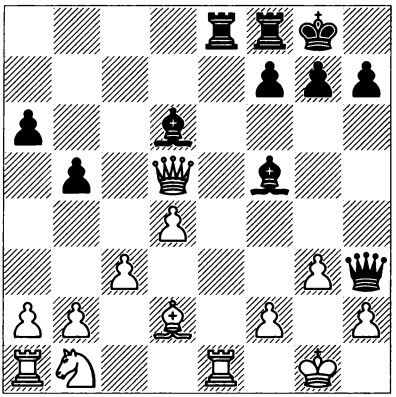
b1) 19...♗d3 is Black's traditional move. 20 ♖xe6 (20 ♕g2!? is an idea, intending 20...♕h5 21 ♕f3) 20...fxe6 21 ♕xd6 ♖xf2 22 ♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 23 ♔f3 ♕e2+ 24 ♔f4 h6! 25 ♕d8+ ♔h7 26 ♕e7 ♔h8, with a forced repetition, is given by Nunn.

b2) 19...♗xg3!? looks worth a try. After 20 hxg3 ♖xe3 21 fxe3 ♕xg3+ 22 ♕g2 ♕xe3+ Black has counterplay: 23 ♔h2 (or 23 ♔h1 ♕h6+ 24 ♕h2 ♕g6) 23...♕h6+ 24 ♔g3 ♖e8 25 ♘f3 ♕g6+ 26 ♔h2 ♕h5+ 27 ♔g1 ♗e4 28 ♔f2 ♖e6!.

17...♖ae8 18 ♗d2 *(D)*

After 18 ♖e3?! ♕h5! Black has good prospects; for example, 19 ♕f3 (worse are 19 ♕xd6? ♗h3 –+ and 19 f3? ♕g6! –+ attacking the b1-knight and threatening ...♗f4) 19...♕xf3 20 ♖xf3 ♖e1+ 21 ♔g2 ♗e4 22 ♘d2 ♗d5 and Black is much better.

B



18...♗f4!

This sharp move is Nunn's recommendation. Instead both 18...♖e6?! 19 ♘a3! and 18...♕g4?! 19 ♘a3 (not 19 ♕xd6? ♖xe1+ 20 ♗xe1 ♕d1 21 ♕e5 ♗d7!) 19...♗xa3 20 f3! look better for White. However, 18...♗d3 is quite solid. After 19 ♘a3 ♗xa3 20 bxa3 ♗c4 21 ♕f3 ♕d7 White's winning chances look minimal despite the two extra pawns because White's pawns are bad and the opposite-coloured bishops help Black, Chandler-Nikolić, Leningrad 1987.

19 ♖xe8

Alternatives:

a) 19 gxf4?! ♖xe1+ (this is even better than 19...♕g4+ 20 ♔h1 ♗e4+, when Black has at the very least a draw) 20 ♗xe1 ♕g4+ 21 ♔h1 ♗e6! 22 ♕e4 ♕d1! was given by Nunn. If 23 f5, then 23...♗d7! with the idea 24...♖e8.

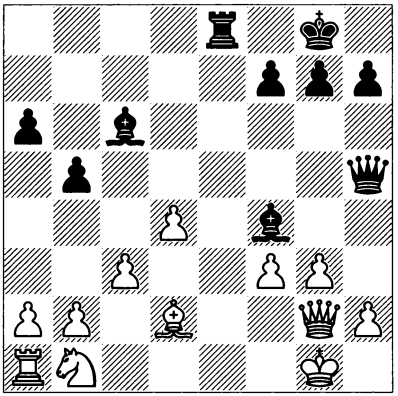
b) 19 ♕g2? ♖xe1+ 20 ♗xe1 ♗c1! 21 ♕xh3 ♗xh3 22 ♘d2 ♗xb2 23 ♖b1 ♗xc3 recovers both pawns and leaves Black clearly better, Sakhalkar-Barczay, corr. 1959-60.

19...♖xe8 20 ♕c6

20 ♕g2? ♕h5 21 f3 (21 gxf4 ♗h3 –+) 21...♗d3! 22 gxf4 ♖e6! 23 ♕f2 ♗e2! ∓ gave Black a strong attack in Femmel-Sakai, corr. 2001.

20...♗d7 21 ♕g2 ♕h5 22 f3 ♗c6 *(D)*

W



Now:

a) 23 ♗xf4? is bad due to 23...♗xf3 and Black is much better.

b) 23 gxf4? ♖e6! 24 ♔f2 ♖g6 25 ♕h1 ♕h4+ 26 ♔e3 and now:

b1) Nunn originally gave 26...♖e6+ 27 ♔d3 ♕f2. After 28 ♔c2 ♗xf3 29 ♕c1 ♖e2 30 a4 ♗e4+ 31 ♔b3 g6, matters are still not so clear although Black can hardly be worse.

b2) When this book was at proof stage, Nunn pointed out 26...♕h3!, when White is in deep trouble. After 27 ♘a3 ♖g2, 28 ♕d1 ♕e6+ 29 ♔d3 ♕f5+ 30 ♔e3 g5! is winning for Black, while after 28 ♕f1 ♕e6+ 29 ♔d3 ♕f5+ 30 ♔e3 ♖xh2! White will not solve his king's problems without shedding too much material.

c) After 23 g4 ♕h4 24 ♕f2 Black probably has nothing better than forcing a draw with 24...♗xh2+ 25 ♕xh2 ♖e1+.

Conclusions

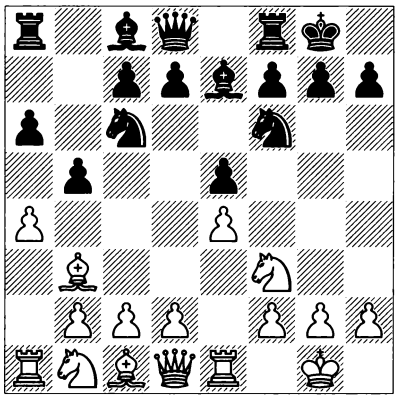
Although 12 ♖e1 and 12 g3 are often used as transpositional devices, there are some independent lines. The old tries 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e2, 12 ♗xd5 cxd5 13 d4 ♗d6 14 ♖e3 and 15 ♗xd5 cxd5 16 ♕f3 have not seen many developments over the last couple of decades. The most topical try is 15 ♕e2. Black can reply with the standard 15...♗g4, but currently 15...♗d7 looks more solid. This is a line we shall surely see more of in the future.

Part 3: Anti-Marshall

8 Anti-Marshall: 8 a4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a4 *(D)*

B



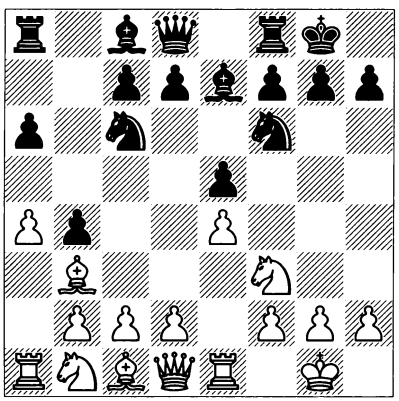
Very often White does not want to delve into the Marshall Attack. Although White wins a pawn and has several ways to test both Black's resources and his memory, many players prefer not to be defending with the white pieces at such an early stage. For a long time, the most common way for White to dodge the Marshall Attack was with 8 a4. White makes a probing move on the queenside without committing his centre at all. This continuation was brought back into prominence by Garry Kasparov in his World Championship against Nigel Short. Black's most common answer is to develop with 8...♗b7. After 9 d3 d6, Kasparov honed 10 ♘bd2 (instead of the traditional 10 ♘c3) into White's preferred weapon. Recently 8 a4 has taken a backseat to the modern 8 h3 of Chapter 9. One reason for this is the resurrection of 8...b4 as a viable system.

Section 8.1: 8...b4 137
Section 8.2: 8...♗b7 147

Section 8.1

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a4 b4 *(D)*

W



For a long time this move was considered rather second-best because it does not develop a piece and the c4-square falls into White's hands. Matters are not so simple, however, and many of the world's top players, including Anand, Aronian, and especially Grishchuk, now favour 8...b4. Usually White continues with 9 d3, when a positional battle ensues, but 9 d4 must also be considered. Thus we have:

A: 9 d4 138
B: 9 d3 139

9 a5 d6 10 d3 transposes to Line B2.

After 9 c3 Black can try to play in Marshall style with 9...d5, although I suspect this will favour White; or he may play more along the lines of the Anti-Marshall. A couple of examples:

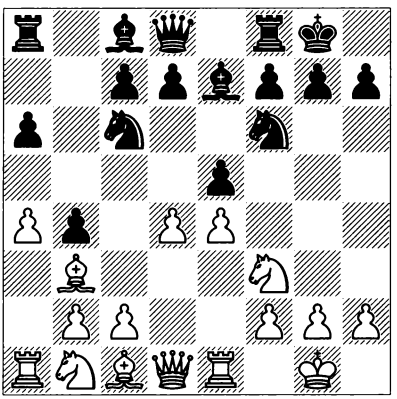
a) 9...d6 10 h3 ♖b8 11 d4 bxc3! 12 bxc3 exd4 13 cxd4 d5 14 e5 ♘e4 with good play for Black, Zapata-I.Zaitsev, Moscow 1989.

b) 9...♖b8 10 d4 d6 11 h3 bxc3 12 bxc3 exd4 13 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 14 cxd4 d5 15 e5 ♘e4 16 ♘d2 ♗b4 17 ♖e3 ♗xd2 (17...♘xf2!? 18 ♔xf2 ♕h4+ 19 ♔e2 ♕xd4 20 ♖a2 ♗c5 is interesting) 18 ♗xd2 was Lahno-Gustafsson, Pulvermühle 2006. Now the simplest is 18...c5 =.

A)

9 d4 *(D)*

B



9...d6

9...exd4?! 10 e5 ♘e8 11 ♗d5 favours White, while 9...♘xd4 10 ♘xd4 (White could also try 10 ♗xf7+ here) 10...exd4 11 e5 ♘e8 12 ♕xd4 ♗b7 13 ♗f4 c5 14 ♕e3 d5 15 exd6 ♗xd6 16 ♘d2 ♕c7 17 ♗e5 ♗xe5 18 ♕xe5 ♕c6 19 f3 ♘d6 20 ♘c4 ♘xc4 21 ♗xc4 ± was Grishchuk-Beliavsky, FIDE Knockout, Tripoli 2004.

10 dxe5

10 h3 exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘a5 (11...♘xd4 12 ♕xd4 c5 13 ♕d3 ♗b7 14 c4?! ♘d7 15 f4 ♖e8 16 ♘d2 ♗f8 17 ♗c2 g6 18 ♖b1 ♗g7 19 b3 ♕h4 with the initiative, Kobaliya-Khalifman, St Petersburg 2003) 12 c3 ♖b8 13 ♗c2 c5 14 cxb4 ♖xb4 15 ♘f3 ♗e6 16 ♘bd2 ♕b8 ½-½ Gashimov-Grishchuk, European Team Ch, Khersonisos 2007.

10...♘xe5

It is understandable that Black wants to exchange knights, but 10...dxe5 leaves White without f3 for his queen and is worth considering. After 11 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 White has:

a) 12 ♘bd2 and then:

a1) 12...♗d6 13 a5 h6 14 ♗c4 ♔f8 15 b3 ♔e7?! 16 ♗d5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♘a7 18 ♘xe5 ♔f8 19 ♘dc4 ♗xe5 20 ♖xe5 ♘c6 21 ♗g5! hxg5 22 dxc6 f6 23 ♖c5 ♗e6 24 ♘b6! ± Kariakin-Aronian, FIDE Grand Prix, Nalchik 2009.

a2) 12...h6 13 a5 ♗d6 14 ♗c4 ♔f8 15 ♘b3 ♔e7 16 ♘fd2 ♗e6 17 ♗f1 ♘d7 18 ♘c4 ♘c5 19 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 20 c3 f6 21 ♗e3 ½-½ Nisipeanu-Inarkiev, French Team Ch, Evry 2008.

b) 12 ♗g5 and now:

b1) 12...♔f8 13 ♘bd2 (13 ♗xf6 gxf6 {I do not see anything wrong with 13...♗xf6} 14 ♗d5 ♗b7 15 ♘bd2 ♘a5 16 ♗xb7 ♘xb7 17 b3 looked a little better for White in Svidler-Aronian, Internet 2004) 13...♘d7 14 ♗d5 ♗b7 15 ♘c4 f6 16 ♗e3 ♗c5 = has been played a couple of times with Black by Zviagintsev.

b2) 12...♖b8 13 ♘bd2 h6 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♗d5 ♘a5! (Black contests the light squares on the queenside) 16 ♘b3 (or 16 ♖ad1 ♖b6 17 ♘b3 ½-½ Svidler-Adams, Dortmund 2006) 16...♘xb3 17 cxb3 c6 18 ♗c4 (18 ♗xc6 ♗e6) 18...a5 19 h3 ♗b7 20 ♖ad1 ♔f8 = Ulybin-Negi, New Delhi 2009.

11 ♘xe5

Other moves do not look dangerous:

a) 11 ♗f4 ♘g6 12 ♗g3 ♗b7 13 ♘bd2 ♘h5 14 ♘c4 ♘xg3 15 hxg3 a5 16 e5 ♗xf3 17 ♕xf3 d5 18 ♘e3 c6 19 ♕h5 ♗c5 20 ♖ad1 ♕b6 is much better for Black, Alekseev-Yakovenko, Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2009.

b) 11 ♘bd2 avoids the fixed centre, but it is rather harmless. 11...♘xf3+ 12 ♘xf3 ♗b7 13 e5 ♘d7! 14 e6 (after 14 ♗f4 both 14...♗xf3 15 ♕xf3 ♘xe5 and Beliavsky's suggested 14...♘c5 15 exd6 ♗xd6 16 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 17 ♕xd6 cxd6 look close to equal) 14...fxe6 15 ♗xe6+ ♔h8 16 ♗d5 c6 17 ♗a2 c5 18 ♗d5 ♗xd5 19 ♕xd5 ♘b6 20 ♕e6 ♗f6 21 a5 ♘d7 22 ♕d5 ♘e5 23 ♘d2 ♘g4 24 ♘f3 ♘e5 25 ♘d2 ♘g4 ½-½ Anand-Naiditsch, Dortmund 2004.

11...dxe5 12 ♕f3

Other moves lead nowhere:

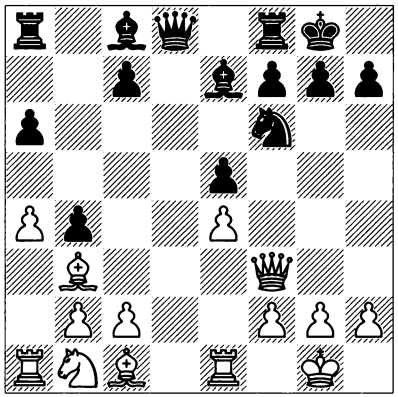
a) 12 ♗g5 ♗c5 (after 12...♗b7 13 ♘d2 ♘d7 14 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 15 ♕e2 a5 16 ♗c4 White had a small edge in Jansa-I.Sokolov, Stary Smokovec 1991) 13 ♕f3 ♗g4! (this is justified because of the weakness of the f2-pawn) 14 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 15 ♕xf6 gxf6 =.

b) 12 ♕e2 ♗c5 (instead 12...♕d4 is probably too active, and after 13 ♘d2 ♗b7 14 ♔h1 a5 15 f3 ♖fd8 16 ♘c4 ♗a6 17 ♗e3 ♗xc4 18 ♗xc4 ♕d7 19 ♖ed1 White's bishop-pair gave him a comfortable edge in Palac-Aronian,

Lausanne 2003) 13 ♗g5 (13 ♗e3 ♗d4 is even, and 13 ♘d2 ♗b7 14 ♘f1? would drop the e4-pawn) 13...♗g4 14 ♕c4 (again 14 ♗xf6? ♕xf6 15 ♕xg4 fails to 15...♕xf2+) 14...♕d6 was at least equal for Black in Torner Planell-Moreno Carretero, corr. 2005.

We now return to 12 ♕f3 *(D)*:

B



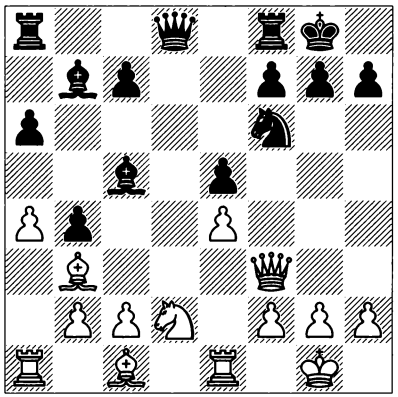
12...♗b7

Also sufficient is 12...♗e6 13 ♘d2 ♗c5 14 h3 ♘d7 15 ♕e2 ♕e7 16 ♗c4 a5 17 ♘b3 ♗b6 = L.Dominguez-Navara, Turin Olympiad 2006. This looks pretty safe.

13 ♘d2 ♗c5 *(D)*

The immediate 13...♔h8 worked out for Black after 14 ♕f5 ♗c5! 15 h3 (not 15 ♕xe5? ♗xf2+) 15...♕d4 in Akopian-Pashikian, European Ch, Budva 2009, but 14 ♘c4 would be more challenging; e.g., 14...♗xe4 (14...♘xe4? 15 ♘a5!) 15 ♕g3. White will follow with ♘xe5 and keep some initiative.

W



14 ♘f1 ♕c8 15 h3

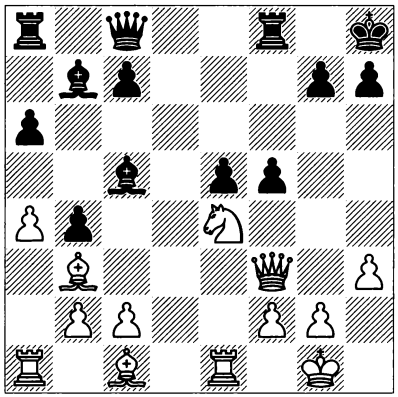
White invites complications.

15...♔h8 16 ♘g3 ♘xe4

And Black obliges! However, at this point there was little choice, as White was intending ♘f5 with a strong initiative.

17 ♘xe4 f5 *(D)*

W



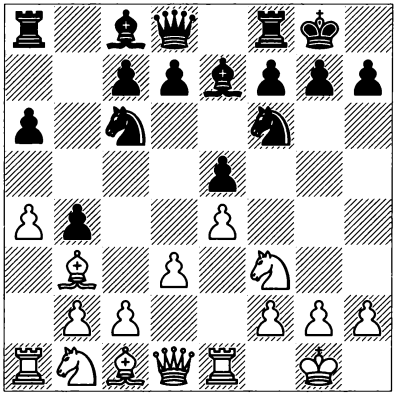
18 ♘xc5! ♗xf3 19 gxf3 f4 20 ♔h2 ♕f5 21 ♗d2

The position was very unclear in Ivanchuk-Aronian, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006, although White went on to win.

B)

9 d3 *(D)*

B



This is the most common: White prefers a manoeuvring game. Often White will fix the a6- and b4-pawns with the advance a5 and bring a piece to c4. It is still possible to play for the d4 advance, with or without c3. Black will usually play ...♗e6 followed by both ...♖b8 and

...♕c8. These moves secure the queenside and give both major pieces more scope.

9...d6

White now has to make a decision. He can simply develop and allow Black to gain space with ...♘a5 and ...c5 or he can try to clamp down on the queenside. We examine:

B1: 10 ♘bd2 140
B2: 10 a5 142

After 10 c3 ♖b8 11 ♘bd2 ♘a5, 12 ♗c2 c5 13 d4 ♕c7 gives Black a good 'Chigorin', while 12 ♗a2 c5 (12...♗g4!?) transposes to the note to Black's 12th move in Line B12, which looks a little better for White.

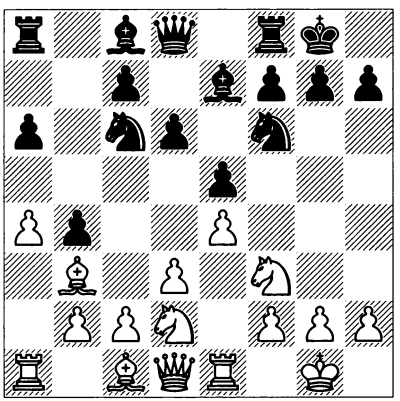
The advance 10 h3 seems rather unnecessary here. Black can continue 10...♘a5 11 ♗a2 c5 12 ♘bd2 and now both 12...♗e6 and 12...♖b8 look good.

B1)

10 ♘bd2 *(D)*

White eschews the chance to fix Black's queenside with 10 a5, preferring to develop.

B



Now Black can either continue his development or he can try to punish White's omission. We have:

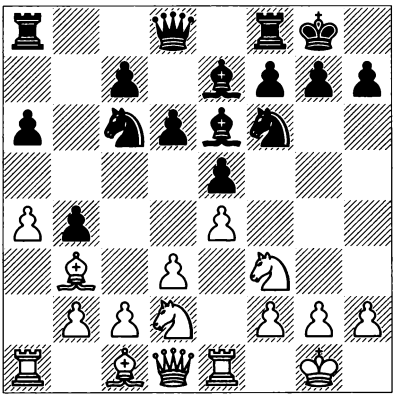
B11: 10...♗e6 140
B12: 10...♘a5 141

10...♖b8 is also possible. Then 11 a5 ♗e6 transposes to the note to Black's 11th move in Line B2, while 11 ♘c4 ♗e6 12 a5 is line 'a2' of that note. 11 c3 was mentioned above via the move-order 10 c3 ♖b8 11 ♘bd2.

B11)

10...♗e6 *(D)*

W



This was tried by Grishchuk against Leko one round after his game with Anand in Line B12.

11 ♗xe6

The only real way to fight for the initiative. 11 ♘c4 can be met by several moves, such as 11...h6, 11...♘d7, 11...a5 or 11...♖b8.

11...fxe6

Now Black is intending to play ...♕e8, ...♘h5 and ...♕g6 with counterplay.

12 ♘f1

12 c3 is less good because Black will be ready to use the b-file: 12...♖b8 (or 12...bxc3 13 bxc3 ♖b8, Hou Yifan-Bacrot, Wijk aan Zee 2008) 13 ♘f1 (after 13 d4 bxc3 14 bxc3, even 14...d5!? is possible, as in Papadopoulos-Gupta, Differdange 2008) 13...bxc3 14 bxc3 ♘a5 15 ♖a2 c5 is level. After 16 d4?! exd4 17 cxd4 ♘b3 ∓ Black already had the initiative in Carlsen-Bacrot, European Team Ch, Khersonisos 2007.

12...♕d7

Black should avoid 12...♘h5? 13 ♘xe5, but 12...♕e8 was suggested by Leko in *New in Chess* magazine. After 13 ♘g3 Black has:

a) 13...♘h5 and now 14 ♘xe5 was Leko's intention, but he points out the resource 14...dxe5 15 ♘xh5 ♘d4! 16 ♘g3 (16 ♗e3 ♘f3+ 17 gxf3 ♕xh5 gives Black excellent play) 16...♕c6! 17 c3 bxc3 18 bxc3 ♕xc3, which he gave as unclear. Black certainly looks OK here.

b) 13...♔h8 14 c3 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♘a5 (Black could consider 15...♖b8!?) 16 d4 ♘d7 17 ♕d3

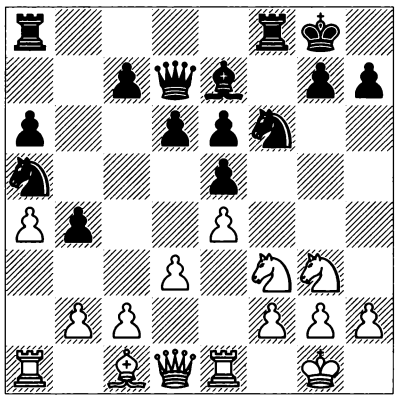
c5 was level in Chuprov-Nayer, Novokuznetsk 2008.

c) 13...♕g6 14 c3 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♖ab8 16 ♗e3 (16 h3 ♘h5) 16...♘g4 17 ♗d2 h5! was suggested by Pavlović, and this looks fine too.

13 ♘g3

Stopping any ...♘h5 ideas.

13...♘a5 *(D)*



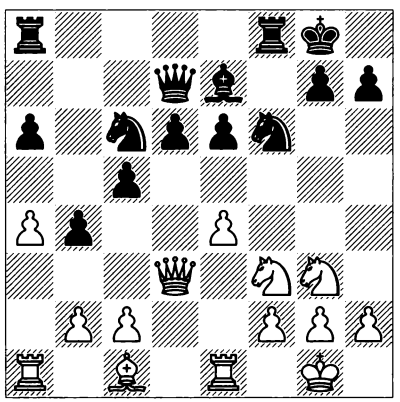
14 d4!

White strikes immediately because 14 c3 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♖ab8 (or 15...c5 16 d4 exd4 17 cxd4 c4) 16 d4 ♘b3 17 ♖a2 exd4 18 cxd4 ♘xc1 19 ♕xc1 ♖b4 gives Black good counterplay according to Leko.

14...exd4 15 ♕xd4 c5

The desirable 15...♘c6 16 ♕d3 ♘g4 is well met by 17 e5! because of the pin on the d-file; e.g., 17...d5 18 h3 ♘h6 19 ♗xh6 gxh6 20 ♕e3 ±.

16 ♕d3 ♘c6 *(D)*



17 c3

After 17 h3 Leko suggests 17...♘e8! intending ...♘c7 =.

17...bxc3?!

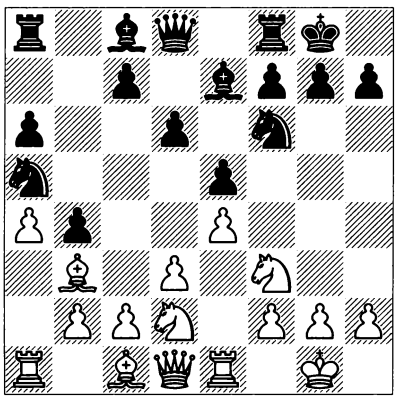
Black should maintain the tension on the queenside and play 17...♘g4! 18 e5 d5 19 h3 c4 20 ♕e2 ♖xf3! intending ...♘gxe5 with compensation.

18 bxc3 ♔h8 19 h3!

± Leko-Grishchuk, World Ch, Mexico City 2007. Black has some difficulties arranging his pieces effectively.

B12)

10...♘a5 *(D)*



Black tries to take advantage of the fact that White did not bother playing 10 a5.

11 ♗a2 c5

Black has also tried the immediate 11...♗e6!? 12 ♗xe6 fxe6 13 d4 (13 c3 bxc3 14 bxc3 ♖b8 15 ♕e2 ♘h5 16 g3 ♕e8 17 ♗a3 ♘b3 18 ♖a2 ♘xd2 ½-½ Adams-Leko, Linares 2005) 13...exd4 14 ♘xd4 ♕d7 15 ♘f1, and here:

a) 15...♘c6 worked out alright for Black after 16 ♘b3 ♕e8 17 ♘g3 h5!? 18 h3 ♕g6 19 ♕e2 h4 20 ♘f1 ♘h5 ½-½ in Kariakin-Alekseev, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

b) 15...c5 looks more natural. 16 ♘f3 ♘c6 17 ♘g3 ♘g4 18 e5 is the same idea as we saw in the note to Black's 17th move in Line B11. Black has:

b1) 18...♖ad8?! just allows White to saddle Black with an inferior pawn-structure: 19 exd6 ♗xd6 20 ♗g5 ♗xg3 21 hxg3 ♕xd1 22 ♖axd1 ♖xd1 23 ♖xd1 ♖f5 24 ♖d6 ± Svidler-Navara, European Team Ch, Khersonisos 2007.

b2) 18...d5 19 ♕e2 (19 h3 ♘xf2! 20 ♔xf2 ♗h4 21 ♖e4 ♕e7 22 ♖f4 g5! 23 ♖xh4 gxh4 24 ♘h5 ♘xe5 is good for Black) 19...c4 20 h3 ♖xf3 followed by 21...♘gxe5 gives Black good play.

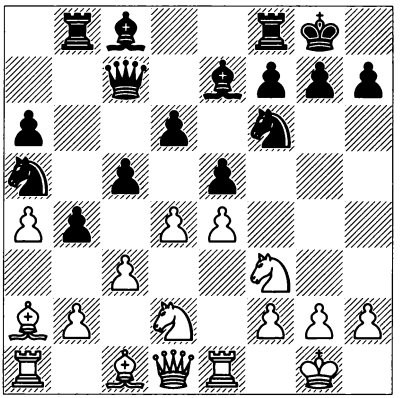
12 c3

White creates some tension in the centre. Too dry is 12 ♘c4 and now either 12...♘c6 13 c3 ♖b8, as in Morozevich-Leko, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2006, or simply 12...♘xc4 13 ♗xc4 when both 13...♗e6 and 13...♗b7 look fine for Black.

12...♘c6

12...bxc3 13 bxc3 ♗e6 14 ♗xe6 fxe6 15 ♕c2 intending ♕a2 is an idea given by Carlsen, while after 12...♖b8 13 d4 Carlsen implies White has an edge in his notes to Anand-Grishchuk in *New in Chess*. 13...♕c7 *(D)* and now:

W



a) 14 ♘f1 exd4 (a more cautious option is to open the b-file with 14...bxc3) 15 cxd4 c4 16 ♗g5 d5?! (16...b3 is better since 17 e5 can be met by 17...dxe5 18 dxe5 ♖d8) 17 exd5 ♘xd5 18 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 19 ♖c1 b3 20 ♗b1 ± Megaranto-Z.Almasi, Calvia Olympiad 2004. White's central control was more important than Black's queenside demonstration and White eventually brought down his famous opponent.

b) 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 ♘c4 ♖d8 16 ♕e2 b3 17 ♘xa5 ♕xa5 18 ♗b1 c4!? (Black sacrifices a pawn for some activity rather than have a rather sterile disadvantage after 18...♕c7 19 ♗d3) 19 ♕xc4 ♗c5 20 h3 was Cheparinov-Aronian, Sofia 2008. Black has a little activity, but with a healthy extra pawn, White must still be better here.

13 d4!

Again, 13 ♘c4 is too slow. After 13...♖b8 14 h3 both 14...♗e6 and 14...h6 look fine for Black.

13...bxc3

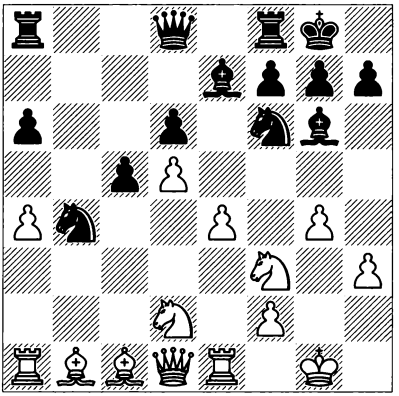
Carlsen suggests that Black keep his pawn on b4 and try 13...cxd4 14 cxd4 ♗g4 15 h3 ♗h5 16 d5 ♘a5 with some queenside play.

14 bxc3 exd4 15 cxd4 ♘b4

Even the world's best players disagree on how to handle these strategic positions. Carlsen also queried this move, preferring 15...cxd4 16 ♘b3 with only a small edge for White.

16 ♗b1 ♗g4 17 h3 ♗h5 18 g4 ♗g6 19 d5 *(D)*

B



The g6-bishop is in danger of remaining out of play.

19...♘d7?!

This was queried by Anand and Marin, but not by Carlsen! Anand gives 19...♖b8 20 ♘h4 (20 ♘c4 ♘bxd5! manages to take advantage of the g6-bishop's position) 20...♘d7 (20...♗xe4! looks even stronger) 21 ♘xg6 hxg6 22 ♖a3 ♗f6 with counterplay.

20 ♘c4

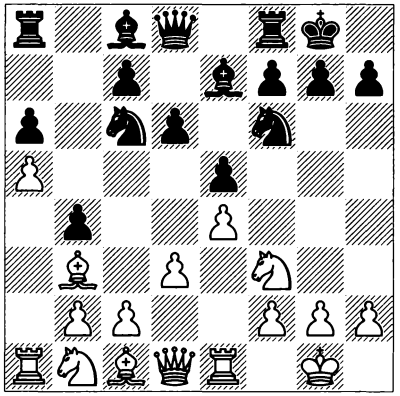
Now, there is harmony in the consensus of the world's great players. White is clearly better, because the g6-bishop is out of play and d6 is weak, Anand-Grishchuk, World Ch, Mexico City 2007.

B2)

10 a5 *(D)*

This is the most common continuation. White fixes both Black's a- and b-pawns and prevents ...♘a5. Now Black's typical scheme of development will be ...♗e6, ...♕c8 and ...♖b8, which

B

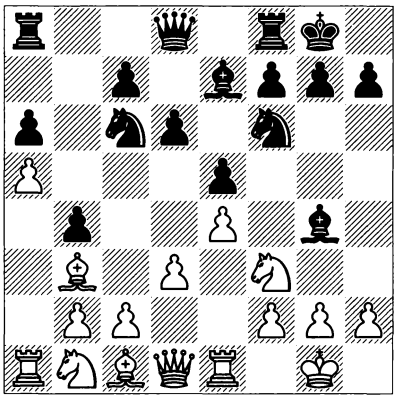


will protect the b-pawn and also create the possibility of playing ...♖b5, when White may have to care for his advanced a5-pawn.

10...♗e6

10...♖b8 11 ♘bd2 ♗e6 just transposes to line 'a' of the next note, but 10...♗g4 *(D)* intending ...♘d4 is interesting. Some examples:

W



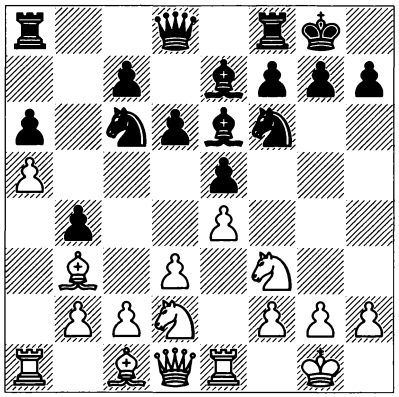
a) 11 c3 bxc3 12 bxc3 ♖b8 13 ♘bd2 ♕c8 14 ♗c4 ♘a7 15 d4 ♘b5 16 ♕c2 ♘d7 17 h3 ♗h5 was unclear in Kosteniuk-Moradiabadi, Paris 2008.

b) 11 ♘bd2 is simple. 11...♘d4 12 ♗c4 c6 13 h3 ♘xf3+ 14 ♘xf3 ♗h5 15 g4 ♗g6 16 ♘h4 ± Hraček-I.Sokolov, Pärnu 1996.

c) 11 ♗e3 d5 (after 11...♘d4 12 ♗xd4 exd4 both 13 ♘bd2 and 13 h3 give White an edge) 12 ♘bd2 h6! 13 h3 d4 14 hxg4 dxe3 15 fxe3 ♘xg4 16 ♗d5 (16 ♘c4 ± is given by Anand because his bishop is stronger than Black's) 16...♕d7 17 ♘c4 ♗f6 18 ♘fd2 h5 19 ♖f1 (this leads to an interesting queen sacrifice) 19...♖ad8 20 ♖f5 g6 21 ♕xg4! hxg4 22 ♖xf6 gave White the initiative in Anand-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 1996.

11 ♘bd2 *(D)*

B



11...♕c8

This is consistent with Black's masterplan. 11...♖b8 generally amounts to the same thing if Black plays ...♕c8 next move. Another idea is simplifying with 11...♗xb3, although this seems a bit cooperative. A couple of independent ideas:

a) 11...♖b8 and here:

a1) 12 ♗c4 ♗xc4 (transposing to Line B21 with 12...♕c8 is probably better) 13 dxc4 (after 13 ♘xc4 Black has scored well with both 13...♖e8 and 13...♖b5) 13...h6 14 ♘f1 ♕c8 15 ♘e3 ♕e6 16 ♘d5 ♗d8 17 ♕d3 ♘e7 18 ♗d2 ± Z.Almasi-Peng Xiaomin, FIDE Knockout, Groningen 1997. White has a grip on d5 and the b4-pawn is weak. Also in this structure White never has to worry about any ...♖b5 ideas.

a2) After 12 ♘c4 Black can of course play 12...♕c8 (Line B22), but there are other moves:

a21) 12...♗g4 13 ♗e3 ♘d7 14 h3 ♗xf3 (not 14...♗h5? 15 g4 ♗g6 16 ♗a4 +– as the c6-knight has nowhere to go) 15 ♕xf3 ♗g5 16 ♗a4 ♗xe3 17 ♕xe3 ♘d4 18 c3 bxc3 19 bxc3 ♘b5 20 d4 was better for White in Kasparov-Grishchuk, Moscow rapid 2002.

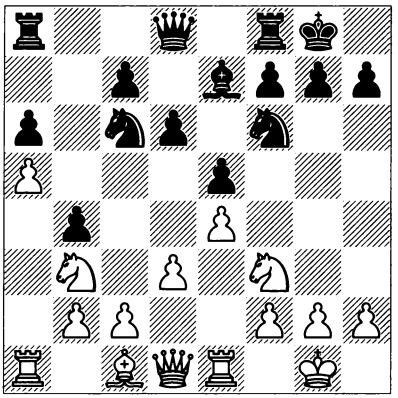
a22) 12...♘d7 13 ♗e3 ♗f6 14 c3 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♖b7 16 ♕c2 ♘a7 17 d4 ♕b8 18 d5 ♗g4 19 ♘fd2 h6 20 h3 ♗h5 21 ♗a4 ♘b5 22 ♘a3 gave White a big advantage on the queenside in de Firmian-Beliavsky, Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 2004.

a23) 12...h6 13 c3 (after 13 h3 Black should just play 13...♕c8) 13...bxc3 14 bxc3 ♘d7 15 ♗a4 ♘a7 16 ♗e3 ♘b5 17 ♕c2 f5 was played

in Shirov-Z.Almasi, Calvia Olympiad 2004. Black has some play but White's pieces look better coordinated.

b) 11...♗xb3 is playable, but not very dynamic. 12 ♘xb3 *(D)* and now:

B



b1) 12...d5 13 ♗g5! (this forces Black to fix the centre) 13...d4 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♘fd2 g6 16 ♘c4 ♖b8 and now Sutovsky played the sharp 17 f4 exf4 18 e5 ♗h4 19 ♖e4 ♖b5 20 ♕f3 ♗g5 21 ♖ae1 with compensation in Sutovsky-Hraček, European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005. The e6 advance is coming and White has a strong initiative on the light squares.

b2) 12...♖e8 is solid. White then has:

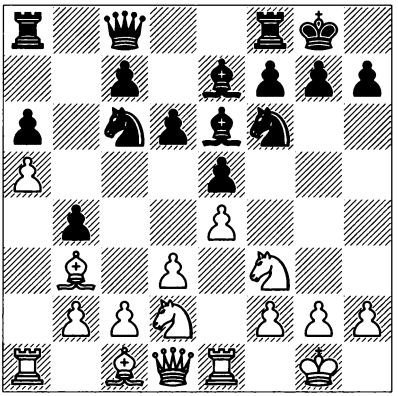
b21) 13 ♗g5 ♘d7 14 ♗e3 ♗f8 15 c3 bxc3 16 bxc3 ♖b8 17 d4 exd4 18 cxd4 ♘b4 19 ♗g5 ♕c8! 20 ♖e3 ♕b7 21 ♘fd2 c5 22 ♖c1 cxd4 23 ♘xd4 d5 24 ♘f5 dxe4 25 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 26 ♖xe4 ♕xe4 27 ♕xd7 ♘d3 was already a little better for Black in Stellwagen-Beliavsky, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

b22) 13 h3 h6 (13...♕d7 14 ♗g5 h6 15 ♗h4 ♘h7 16 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 17 d4 exd4 18 ♘fxd4 ♘f6 19 f3 ♘xd4 20 ♕xd4 ♕b5 21 ♕d3 ♕g5 22 ♕d2 ♕xd2 23 ♘xd2 ♖ae8 24 ♘b3 c5 25 ♖ed1 ♖e6 26 ♖d2 ♔f8 27 ♖ad1 ♔e7 28 ♘c1 gave White a lasting edge in Anand-Ivanchuk, Amber Rapid, Monaco 2001) 14 d4 exd4 15 ♘fxd4 ♕d7 16 f3 ♘xd4 17 ♘xd4 c5 18 ♘b3 ♕c6 (Black is comfortable) 19 ♗e3 d5 20 e5 ♘d7 21 ♗f2 f6 22 exf6 ♗xf6 23 ♖b1 ♕d6 ½-½ Anand-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

We return to 11...♕c8 *(D)*.

White must now decide how to complete his development. Black is likely to respond 12...♖b8 in any case. We have:

W



B21: 12 ♗c4 144
B22: 12 ♘c4 145

12 h3 ♖b8 13 ♘c4 transposes to Line B22 and 12 ♗xe6 is harmless: 12...fxe6 13 ♘c4 ♖b8 14 ♗g5 ♖b5 15 ♘fd2 ♕e8 = Ivanchuk-Kramnik, Amber Blindfold, Monte Carlo 2007.

B21)

12 ♗c4

White eyes the a6-pawn and places his bishop on a square where Black is less likely to exchange it because of the possibility of dxc4. This will allow him to manoeuvre with the d2-knight and complete his development. Another new possibility is to develop with b3 and ♗b2.

12...♖b8

This is the typical building-block move, but other ideas are also possible:

a) 12...h6 13 h3 ♖e8 14 b3 ♗f8 15 ♗b2 ♕d7 16 ♕e2 ♗xc4!? 17 ♘xc4 (17 dxc4 ♘h5 18 ♘f1 ♘f4 19 ♕d1 ♖e6 looks OK for Black) 17...g6 18 ♘h2 ♗g7 19 ♘g4 ♘h7 20 ♘ge3 f5 21 ♘d5 ± Akopian-Svidler, Wijk aan Zee 2004. White's knights are very well placed.

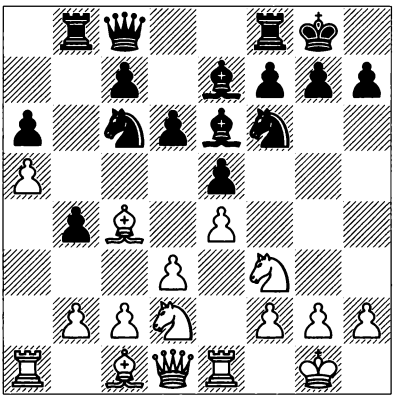
b) 12...♖d8 13 ♗xe6 (this move appears strange after playing ♗c4 the move before) 13...♕xe6 14 ♘c4 ♖ab8 15 b3 ♖b5 gives Black counterplay. After 16 ♗b2 ♘d7 17 ♘e3 ♖e8 18 d4 exd4 19 ♘d5 ♗d8 20 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 21 ♕xd4 ♕e5 22 ♕xe5?! ♘xe5 23 ♖ed1 ♘c6 24 f3 f5! 25 exf5 ♖e2 Black had a clear advantage in Sutovsky-Ponomariov, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006.

c) 12...♖e8 13 ♘f1 (13 b3 ♗f8 14 ♗b2 h6 15 h3 ♖b8 16 ♘f1 g6 17 ♘e3 ♗g7 18 ♘d2

♗xc4 19 dxc4 ♘d4 20 ♘d5 ♘xd5 21 exd5 c5 22 dxc6 ♕xc6 23 ♗xd4 exd4 24 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 25 ♖a4 ♕c5 26 ♘f3 was perhaps a tiny bit better for White in Kasimdzhanov-Grishchuk, FIDE Knockout rapid, Tripoli 2004) 13...h6 14 ♘e3 ♗f8 (here is another point to these rook moves: Black can fianchetto his king's bishop and may also consider ...♘e7 and ...♘g6 to shore up the kingside) 15 b3 g6 16 ♗b2 ♗g7 17 ♕d2 ♖b8 18 h3 ♘d8 19 ♘h2 ♗xc4 20 bxc4 ♘e6 21 ♘hg4 ♘d7 22 ♘d5 (White looks active but his pieces will be pushed back) 22...c6 23 ♘b6?! ♘xb6 24 axb6 h5 25 ♘e3 ♖xb6 26 c5 (this was White's idea, but it backfires) 26...♘xc5 27 ♘c4 ♕c7 28 ♘xb6 ♕xb6 29 d4 ♘e6 30 ♖a4 a5 and with two pawns and a good position for the exchange, Black's play was much easier in Hraček-Bacrot, Bundesliga 2003/4.

We now return to 12...♖b8 *(D)*:

W



13 b3

13 ♘f1 is quite common. Black then has:

a) 13...♖e8?! 14 ♘e3 ♘d4?! 15 ♘xd4 exd4 16 ♘d5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♗d7 18 ♗d2 ♗f6 19 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 20 ♕e2 ♗b5 21 ♖e1 ♗xc4 22 dxc4 h6 23 b3 c5 was Kasparov-Short, World Ch match (game 1), London 1993. I think White's best here is simply 24 dxc6 ♕xc6 25 ♕f3 ♕c7 26 ♗xh6 (26 ♗xb4 is also strong because 26...♖xb4 27 ♖e8+ ♔h7 28 ♕f5+ mates) 26...d3 27 cxd3 ♗c3, which was given as good for Black by various commentators, but White has 28 ♕g3! ±.

b) 13...h6 14 ♘e3 (or 14 h3 ♖e8 15 ♘e3 ♗f8 16 ♗d2 ♗xc4 17 ♘xc4 ♕e6 18 ♘h2?! ♖b5?! {18...♘xe4!} 19 b3 g6 20 ♘g4 ♔h7 21 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 22 ♗e3 ♗g7 23 ♖a4 ♕e6 24 ♗d2 ♖eb8 25 ♘e3 ♘e7 = Leko-Grishchuk, Dubai rapid 2002) 14...♖e8 15 ♘d5 ♗d8 16 ♗d2 ♗xd5 17 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 18 exd5 ♘e7 19 d4 ♘xd5 20 dxe5 dxe5 21 ♘xe5 ♗f6 22 ♘c6 ♖a8 23 ♘xb4 ♘xb4 24 ♗xb4 ♗xb2 25 ♖b1 ½-½ Leko-Svidler, Russia-ROW rapid, Moscow 2002.

c) 13...♗xc4 14 dxc4 ♘d8! was suggested by Kasparov, although it has not seen a high-level over-the-board test. Black's knight will be well placed on e6, where it defends the kingside and can jump to c5 to attack the e4-pawn. After 15 ♘e3 g6 (15...♘e6 16 ♘f5 ♗d8 with the idea ...♘c5 also looks fine) 16 ♘d5 ♘xd5 17 cxd5 c6!? 18 dxc6 ♕xc6 19 ♗h6 ♖e8 20 ♕d3 ♘e6 21 ♖e2 ♖ec8 Black had sufficient play in this Sicilian structure in Glaser-Lambert, corr. 1994.

13...♘d7 14 ♘f1 ♗f6 15 ♘e3 g6

Black can also play 15...♗xc4!? immediately. After 16 ♘xc4 (16 dxc4 is possible as well) 16...♘c5 17 ♗b2 ♘e6 18 ♘e3 g6 19 c3 bxc3 20 ♗xc3 ♗g7 21 ♘d5 ♕d7 Black had equalized in Yakovenko-Zhang Zhong, Taiyuan 2006.

16 ♗b2 ♗xc4

Black makes this capture now that White has spent a few moves manoeuvring with his knight.

17 ♘xc4

After 17 dxc4 ♘c5 18 ♘d5 ♗g7 Black should be safe enough. The c5-square is a great square for Black's knight and Black can prepare ...f5.

17...♖e8 18 d4?!

This is mistimed for tactical reasons. After 18 h3 or 18 ♕d2 the position is about level.

18...exd4 19 ♘xd4 ♘ce5

This is OK, but Marin points out the tactical opportunity 19...♗xd4!? 20 ♗xd4 d5.

20 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 21 ♖b1 ♕b7 22 f3 ♘f6 23 ♕d2

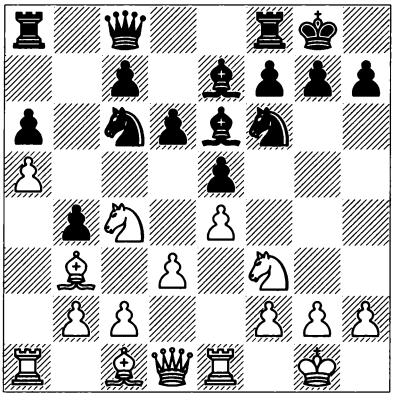
This was Ponomariov-Bacrot, Sofia 2006. Here Marin suggests 23...♘h5 24 g3 c5 25 ♘e2 ♗xb2 26 ♖xb2 d5!? to try to take advantage of White's uncoordinated pieces.

B22)

12 ♘c4 *(D)*

White avoids exchanging pieces for the time being and puts pressure on e5 to discourage the ...d5 advance. This is just as common as 12

B



♗c4, and here too Black has been holding his own.

12...♖b8

As always, this is a useful move for Black. It protects the b4-pawn and may even come out to b5 to put pressure on White's a5-pawn.

13 h3

13 ♗g5 has also been played at a very high level, although frankly I do not really understand this move. Black has:

a) 13...h6 is natural and good:

a1) 14 ♗e3 just gives Black ...h6 for free. 14...♖d8 15 h3 ♗f8 16 ♕d2 (after 16 d4 exd4 17 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♘xe4!? 19 ♖xe4 ♗xc4 {19...d5!? 20 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 21 ♘d2 c5 22 ♗e3 c4 is unclear} 20 ♗xc4 d5 21 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 22 ♕e2 ♕f5 the position is equal) 16...♘e7 17 ♔h2 ♘g6 ½-½ Esserman-Vigorito, Somerville 2009.

a2) 14 ♗h4 ♖b5 was suggested by Ponomariov. One point is that after 15 d4?! exd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 17 ♕xd4 d5! Black's pieces all spring to life.

b) 13...♔h8!? intends ...♘g8 and ...f5 with counterplay. 14 h3 (after 14 d4 Black can play 14...exd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 16 ♕xd4 ♘g8 17 ♗f4 f5!, as in Leko-Anand, Amber Rapid, Monaco 2006, or Aronian's suggestion 14...♗g4) 14...♘g8! and here:

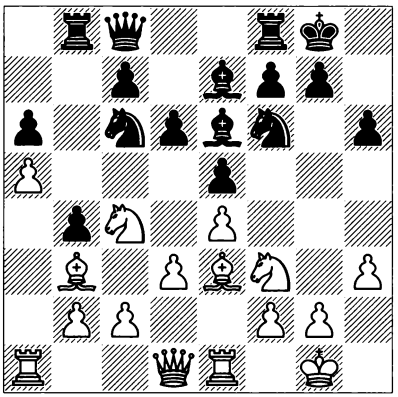
b1) 15 c3?! allowed Black to execute his plan with 15...bxc3 16 bxc3 f5 in Leko-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2006. Black already has the initiative.

b2) 15 ♗xe7 ♘gxe7 16 ♘g5 ♘d4 17 ♗a2 b3 18 ♗xb3 ♘xb3 19 cxb3 ♘c6 gives Black good compensation for the pawn according to Aronian.

b3) 15 ♗d2 f5 16 ♘e3 is considered the most principled try by Aronian. White wants to control the central light squares. He gives 16...♗xb3 17 cxb3 fxe4 18 dxe4 ♗d8 as being a little better for White.

13...h6 14 ♗e3 *(D)*

B



14...♖d8

This is a healthy move. With Black's rook lined up against White's queen, ...d5 is a distinct possibility and Black can also manoeuvre with ...♗f8 and maybe ...♘e7. Harikrishna's 14...♘h7!? is also very interesting. Against an indifferent response, Black will play ...f5 as in Leko-Aronian above, while ...♘g5 is also a possibility. 15 d4 exd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♖b5! 18 f4 ♗f6 19 f5?! (19 ♕d3 is safer) 19...♗xc4 20 ♗xc4 ♗xd4+ 21 ♕xd4 ♖e5 22 ♕d3 ♘f6 23 ♗xa6 ♕a8 24 ♗b5 ♖b8 25 ♗c4 ♖xa5 26 ♖xa5 ♕xa5 27 ♕b3 ♖f8 28 ♔h1 ♕c5 29 c3 bxc3 30 ♕xc3 ♖e8 31 ♗d3 ♕xc3 32 bxc3 ♖e5 ∓ Hou Yifan-Harikrishna, Paks 2007. Of course White can improve somewhere here, but Black still looks pretty comfortable.

15 ♕e2 *(D)*

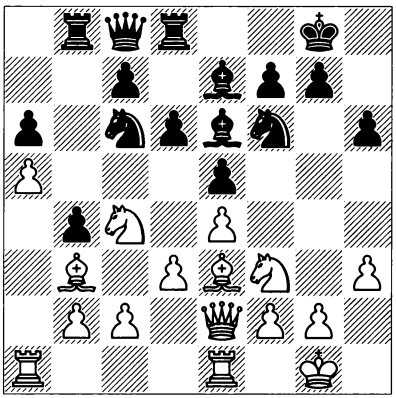
The exotic 15 ♕b1 ♘d7 16 ♕a2 does not trouble Black after 16...♖b5 17 c3 d5! 18 exd5 ♗xd5 19 ♘d6 (19 ♘fd2 ♘f6 is also better for Black because his pieces coordinate so well) 19...♗xb3 20 ♘xc8 ♗xa2 21 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 22 ♖xa2 bxc3 23 bxc3 ♘c6 gave Black an edge in Stellwagen-Onishchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2005 because the a5-pawn is weak.

15...♗f8

15...♕b7, as in Caruana-Werle, Wijk aan Zee 2009, also looks quite reasonable.

16 ♘fd2

B



This move protects the e4-pawn and the c4-knight so that both ♗a4 and the d4 advance become possibilities.

Grishchuk has twice faced 16 ♘cd2, which seems rather passive. After 16...♗xb3 17 ♘xb3 ♖e8 (17...d5!?) 18 ♘fd2 d5 19 exd5 ♘xd5 20 ♕f3 ♖b5 21 ♘c4 ♕d7 there is:

a) 22 ♖ad1 f5 23 ♗c1 g6 24 ♖e2 ♔h7 25 ♖de1 ♗g7 26 ♕g3 ♕f7 27 ♕f3 ♕d7 28 ♕g3 ♕f7 29 ♕f3 was agreed drawn here in the game Smirin-Grishchuk, Russia-ROW rapid, Moscow 2002 although there is still plenty of play left.

b) 22 ♗d2 g6 23 ♖e2 ♗g7 24 ♖ae1 f5 25 ♕g3 g5 26 f3 ♕f7 27 ♕f2 ♘f4 28 ♗xf4 gxf4 was unclear in A.Kovačević-Grishchuk, European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2002.

16...♘e7

16...d5?! runs into 17 ♗a4! dxc4 18 ♗xc6 cxd3 19 cxd3 ♗d7 20 ♖ec1 with an edge for White (Gershon).

With the text-move, the knight heads to the secure g6-square in anticipation of White's d4 advance. I like this idea, but another possibility that has been played by a couple of rather decent players is 16...♕b7!?. This is a sensible move that protects the c6-knight and connects the rooks. White has tried:

a) 17 ♕f3 ♔h7 18 ♘f1 ♘e7 19 ♘g3 ♘g6 20 ♘h5 (20 ♘f5 d5!) ½-½ Svidler-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2006.

b) 17 ♗a4?! looks like a shot in the dark. 17...♘e7 18 ♕f3 ♘g6! 19 ♗b3 (19 ♗xh6 d5!) 19...♗e7 20 ♕g3 ♔h8 21 ♘f3 ♘h5 22 ♕h2 c5 23 ♘cd2 ♕c8 24 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 25 ♘f1 f5 gave Black the initiative in Lutz-Svidler, Bundesliga 2005/6. Clearly Svidler was impressed with Aronian's idea, as this game was played a couple of months after Svidler-Aronian.

17 d4 ♘g6

This is solid. Black chose to give up the centre with 17...exd4 18 ♗xd4 in Volokitin-Gustafsson, Bundesliga 2005/6, and now I prefer the solid 18...♘d7 to the game's 18...♘h7.

18 d5 ♗d7 19 ♗a4

White cannot play 19 c3 because 19...bxc3 20 bxc3 ♘xe4! exploits the loose bishop on b3. Black's position is solid enough after the temporizing 19 ♖ec1 ♖e8 20 c3 ♘f4 21 ♕d1 ♕d8!? (the queen is not needed at c8 any more so Black places it on its home square, from where it can access either side of the board) 22 ♗a4 ♕e7 23 b3 g6 24 ♘b2 ♖ec8 25 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 26 c4 ♕e8 27 ♕f1 ½-½ Kariakin-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

19...♗b5!

Now if White wants to exchange bishops he will have to prepare it because after 20 ♗xb5? axb5 he loses the knight on c4.

20 b3 ♗e7 21 ♖ec1 c6!

This is a typical method for Black in the Ruy Lopez, especially when White cannot play c4. Black fights in the centre and gains room for his pieces.

22 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 23 ♘b6 ♕b7 24 dxc6 ♕xc6 25 ♕c4

½-½ Adams-Anand, FIDE World Ch, San Luis 2005. Already Black could consider playing for an advantage. After 25...♕b7 with the idea ...d5 Black has good chances.

Section 8.2

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a4 ♗b7 *(D)*

This is the traditional main line. Black develops a piece and avoids committing his queenside pawn-structure for the time being.

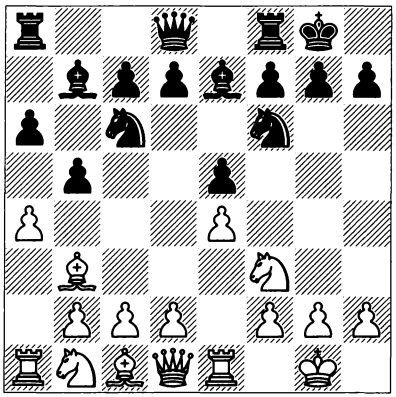
9 d3

Exchanging immediately with 9 axb5 axb5 10 ♖xa8 is harmless and both 10...♗xa8 and 10...♕xa8 are fine for Black.

9 c3 d5 10 exd5 ♘xd5 is covered via the move-order 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 a4 ♗b7 in Line A of Section 10.5.

The only other move to consider is 9 ♘c3, but this is well met by 9...♘d4!:

W



a) 10 ♘xe5?! ♘xb3 11 cxb3 b4 wins back the pawn with advantage.

b) 10 ♘xd4 exd4 11 ♘d5 ♘xd5 12 exd5 d3! disrupts White's development.

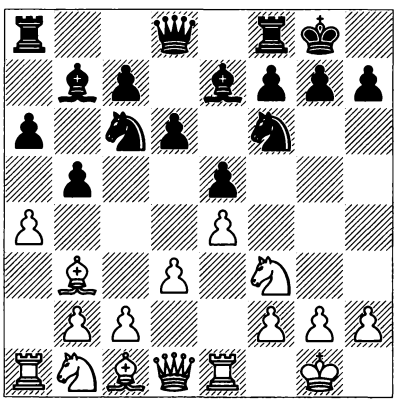
c) 10 ♗a2 b4 11 ♘d5 ♘xf3+ (the immediate 11...♘xd5 is also equal) 12 ♕xf3 ♘xd5 13 exd5 ♗d6 is level.

d) 10 axb5 ♘xb3 11 cxb3 axb5 12 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 13 d3 b4 (or 13...d6 14 ♘xb5, when both 14...♖b8 and 14...♕a5 give Black compensation for the pawn) 14 ♘e2 d5 and Black has the initiative.

9...d6 *(D)*

Several other moves are playable here, with the principal alternative being 9...♖e8, but we shall stick with the main line.

W



Now White has three main ways to play. The first looks like a normal Ruy Lopez with an early d3, which should not be dangerous to Black. The second is the traditional main line, while the third is the most flexible. We examine:

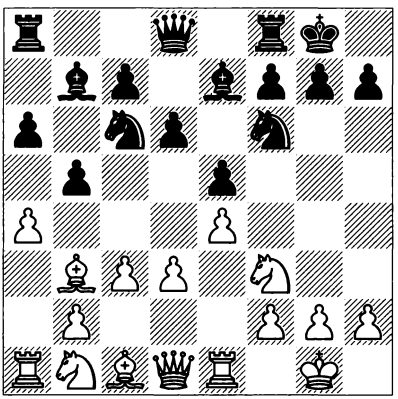
A: 10 c3	148
B: 10 ♘c3	150
C: 10 ♘bd2	152

White can also play the unnatural 10 ♗d2, which is directed against the traditional ...♘a5 plan. However, after 10...b4 (there are other moves too, but this is consistent with the lines examined here) White does not have a square for his queen's knight. 11 c3 (after 11 a5, the typical 11...♖b8 is a good answer, while 11 ♗g5 can be met by 11...♘d7, 11...♘a5 or even 11...♔h8!? intending ...♘g8 and ...f5) 11...bxc3 12 bxc3 (12 ♘xc3 ♘a5 13 ♗a2 c5 =) and here 12...♘a5, intending ...c5, is very solid, while Black can also try the speculative 12...d5 with the idea 13 exd5 ♘xd5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 ♖xe5 ♗f6 followed by ...♕d6, when Black's development lead and pressure on c3 give him some compensation for the pawn.

A)

10 c3 *(D)*

B



White continues in 'slow Ruy Lopez' fashion.

10...♘a5

Black can also play 10...♘b8 or 10...♘d7, but there is no reason not to continue in 'Chigorin' style and grab space.

11 ♗a2

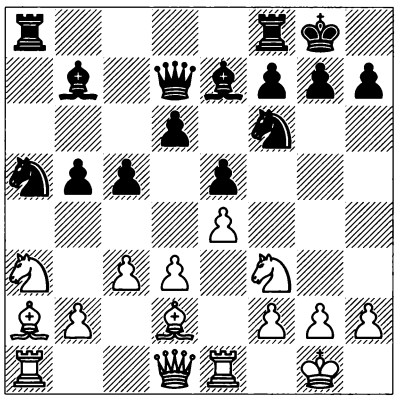
This gives the game a little original flavour. Instead 11 ♗c2 c5 12 ♘bd2 is a Ruy Lopez with d3. Black can play 12...♕c7, 12...♘c6 or 12...♖e8.

11...c5 12 ♘a3

White takes aim at the b5-pawn. 12 ♘bd2 looks natural, but with the bishop on a2 the e4-pawn is a bit tender, and 12...♕c7 13 ♘f1 c4! undermines White's centre. Black has a development lead and plenty of space and already stands well. Blowing up the position with a quick ...d5 is even a possibility.

12...♕d7 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♗d2 *(D)*

B



White intends to play b4 to drive back the black knight, after which the b5-pawn will be loose. Black can ignore the threat or prevent it.

A1: 14...h6 149
A2: 14...c4 149

A1)

14...h6

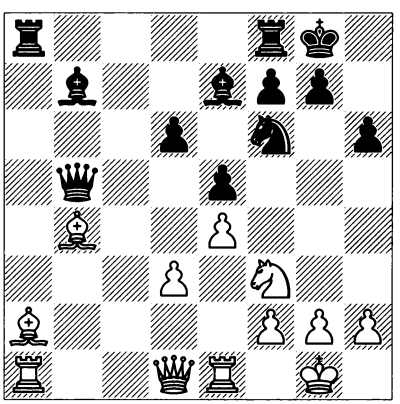
Black is not concerned with White's idea and simply makes a useful move.

15 b4 cxb4 16 cxb4 ♘c6 17 ♘xb5 ♘xb4

This resource regains the pawn.

18 ♗xb4 ♕xb5 *(D)*

W



The queenside pawns have disappeared and the structure is symmetrical. Black is very close to equality, but White can still press a little bit.

19 ♗c4!

This trick allows White to keep some initiative.

19...♕xb4

After 19...♕d7 20 ♕b3 White maintains an edge because of the pressure on f7, as he also does in the case of 19...♖xa1 20 ♕xa1 ♕d7 21 ♕a3 ♖a8 22 ♕b3 ±.

20 ♖b1 ♕a5!?

20...♕c5 21 ♖xb7 ♖a7 22 ♖b5 (Black gradually equalized after 22 ♖xa7 ♕xa7 23 ♘h4 ♔h7 24 ♘f5 g6 25 ♘e3 ♔g7 = in Leko-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 1996) 22...♕c7 and now instead of 23 ♕b3 ♘d7 (Kholmov-Geller, Moscow 1995), 23 ♘h4 gives White a nagging little edge.

21 ♖xb7 ♖a7 22 ♕b1

Another possibility is 22 ♖b5 ♕a3 23 ♘h4 ±.

22...♗d8

Perhaps 22...♘d7 is a better try.

23 ♖b5 ♕a3 24 g3 ♘d7 25 ♔g2 g6 26 ♖e2 ♕a1 27 ♕xa1

White is unambitious. After 27 ♕b4 or 27 ♕c2 Black should still equalize, but he will have to take some care because White's bishop is more active.

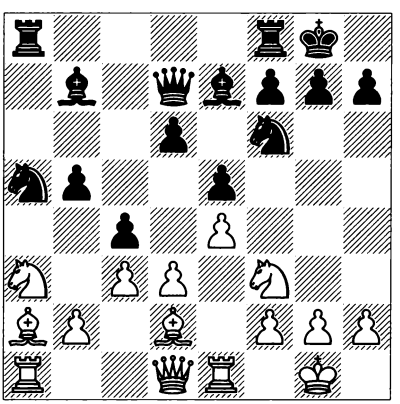
27...♖xa1

The game is equal, Hübner-Kamsky, PCA Qualifier, Groningen 1993.

A2)

14...c4 *(D)*

W



This is a more active continuation. Black discourages b4 and sets out to undermine White's e4-pawn.

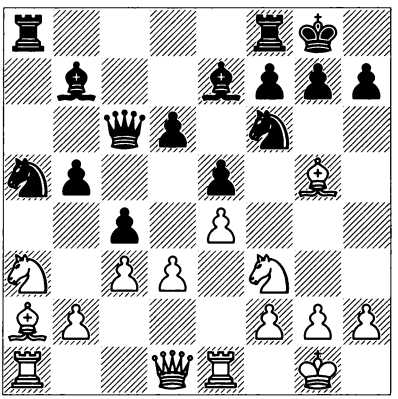
15 ♗g5

White intends dxc4, when ♘xe5 will be a possibility because of the latent pressure on the d-file and the h4-d8 diagonal.

15...♕c6! *(D)*

This has been seen a few times in practice. 15...♖fc8?! allowed White to carry out his threat with 16 dxc4 ♘xc4 17 ♗xc4 bxc4 18 ♘xe5 in Balashov-Solozhenkin, Katowice 1991.

W



Black has not experienced any real problems from this position.

16 ♕e2

A couple of other moves have also been tried, but White has not achieved anything:

a) 16 ♘c2 h6 17 ♘b4 ♕c5 18 ♗h4 ♖a7 (18...♖fe8 looks more natural) 19 dxc4 bxc4 20 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 21 ♕e2 and now 21...♖c8 was equal in Smirin-Gyimesi, Croatian Team Ch, Šibenik 2005, while 21...♖fa8 intending ...♗c8-e6 even gives Black the chance to play for an edge.

b) 16 d4 is natural, but with White's pieces jumbled on the queenside it is difficult for him to fight for the initiative. The a3-knight is especially awkward. After 16...♖fd8 17 ♘h4 g6 18 ♕f3 ♔g7 19 ♖ad1 ♕e8 20 ♗b1 ♘b3 Black was fine in Milos-Nguyen Anh Dung, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

16...♖fc8 17 d4

Again, this is not terribly dangerous. Usually White gets to play this move very early in the Ruy Lopez. Here Black has already made inroads on the queenside.

17...♕e8!? 18 ♕c2

18 dxe5 dxe5 19 ♘xe5? fails to 19...♗xa3, winning a piece.

18...♘c6 19 d5 ♘b8 20 ♖ad1 ♘a6

The knight is heading to c5. Already Black's position looks more promising. Black could avoid the following trick with 20...♘bd7, although there is really nothing to fear from White's tactics. Note that 21 ♘xb5 would be impossible because of the loose bishop on a2.

21 ♘xe5 dxe5 22 d6

The threat of ♗xf6 and d7 wins back the piece.

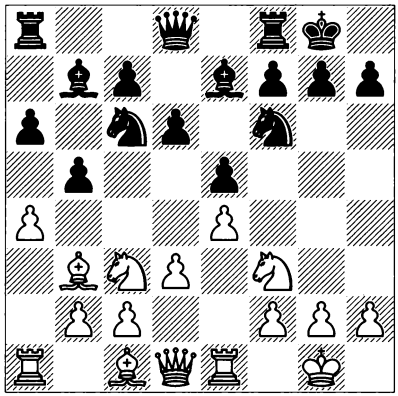
22...♘c5 23 dxe7 ♕xe7

∓ Palac-Pujos, Cannes 2002. Black's space advantage and active pieces are more important than White's bishop-pair.

B)

10 ♘c3 *(D)*

B



This is the traditional main line.

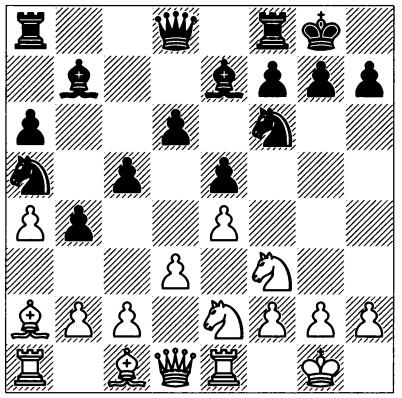
10...♘a5

Following the standard recipe. Another idea is to force things with 10...b4, because 11 ♘d5 (11 ♘e2 ♘a5 12 ♗a2 will transpose to the main line) is not too dangerous. After 11...♘xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♖b8 13 ♗d2 ♕d7 14 a5 ♘d8 15 ♗c4 c5 16 c3 bxc3 17 bxc3 ♘e6 18 ♕c2 ♗f6 19 ♕a2 ♘c7 20 ♖ab1 ♘b5 21 h3 ♗c6 Black had equalized in Kotronias-Radjabov, European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005.

11 ♗a2

The greedy 11 axb5 ♘xb3 12 cxb3 axb5 13 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 14 ♘xb5 gives Black compensation after 14...♖b8 or 14...♕a5.

11...b4 12 ♘e2 c5 *(D)*



13 ♘g3

The knight was not well placed on e2 because it disturbed the coordination of White's pieces and interfered with White's protection of the e4-pawn, so this is the most logical continuation. Others:

a) 13 ♗d2 ♖b8 14 ♘g3 ♗c8 15 h3 ♘e8!? (15...♗e6 is also possible) 16 ♘h2 ♗g5 17 ♘f3 ♗f6 18 ♘h2 g6 19 ♘g4 ♗g5 20 ♘e3 ♔h8 was Caruana-Adams, Gibraltar 2007. Black will soon play ...f5 with counterplay.

b) 13 c3 used to be considered somewhat critical. 13...bxc3 14 bxc3 and now 14...c4! is a typical move undermining the e-pawn. After 15 ♘g3 Black has:

b1) 15...cxd3 16 ♕xd3 ♗c8 (Black intends to regroup with ...♗e6 and ...♘b7-c5) 17 ♗g5! ♘b7 18 ♘d2 ♘c5 19 ♕c2 was Ljubojević-Karpov, London 1982, and now 19...♗e6 looks the most consistent.

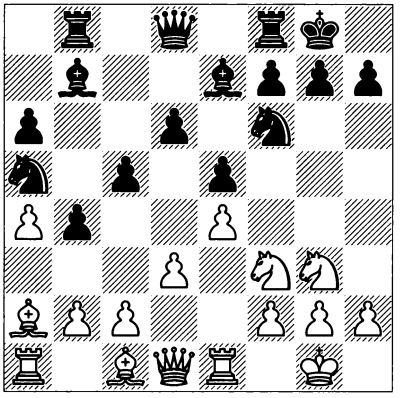
b2) 15...g6 was suggested by Nunn. This remains untried, but looks reasonable.

b3) 15...♘d7 was recommended by Nunn and Harding. Then 16 ♗a3 (16 ♘f5 ♘c5 gives Black good play) 16...g6 17 d4 ♕c7 18 ♖b1 (the odd-looking 18 ♖c1 was met with 18...♖fe8 19 ♗b4 ♖ac8 20 ♘d2 d5!?, blowing up the position, in Kupreichik-Am.Rodriguez, Minsk 1982) 18...♖ab8 looks fairly level.

13...♗c8

This is a typical manoeuvre. The bishop heads to e6 to neutralize White's a2-bishop. The pawn sacrifice 13...b3 looks too ambitious in view of 14 ♗xb3 (14 cxb3 ♘c6 leaves the a2-bishop buried and justifies Black's play), when White's knight will head to c4. Black did not really have anything for the pawn after 14...♘xb3 15 cxb3 a5 16 ♗d2 ♘d7 17 ♗c3 ♘b8 18 ♘d2 ♘c6 19 ♘c4 ♗c8 20 ♖f1 ♗e6 21 f4 in Anand-Bryson, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1984.

Another thematic idea is 13...♖b8 *(D)*.



This is a bit of a waiting move but it anticipates White's natural plan to play in the centre with c3 by occupying the b-file. White has:

a) 14 ♘d2 ♗c8 (14...♘e8 15 ♘c4 ♘xc4 16 ♗xc4 ♘c7 17 ♕g4 gives White some initiative) 15 ♘c4 (15 h3 brings us back to the main line) 15...♘xc4 (another idea is 15...♗g4!? 16 f3 ♗e6) 16 ♗xc4 ♘e8 (now Black cannot play 16...♗e6 because of 17 ♗xa6) 17 f4 (17 ♘f5 ♗g5 =) 17...exf4 18 ♗xf4 ♗f6 19 ♖b1 ♘c7 20 ♘h5 ♗d4+ 21 ♗e3 ♗e5 22 ♘f4 ♘e6 23 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 24 ♗xe6 fxe6 was pleasant for Black in A.Sokolov-Balashov, Moscow TV rapid 1987.

b) 14 ♘f5 ♗c8 and here:

b1) 15 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 gives Black no problems because ...♗e6 will exchange off one of White's bishops. 16 ♘d2 ♗e6 17 ♘c4 ♘xc4 18 ♗xc4 a5 = Short-Kholmov, Erevan 1984.

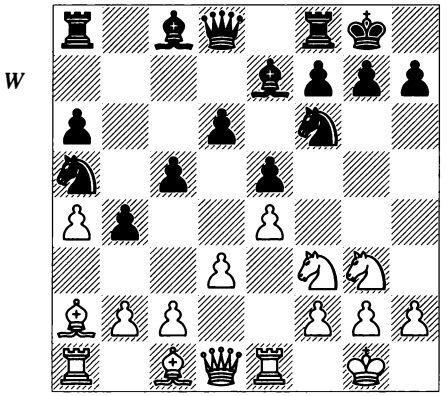
b2) 15 ♘3h4 ♘e8 16 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 17 g3 ♗e6 = Naiditsch-Ehlvest, Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2007 is similar.

b3) 15 ♘e3 ♗e6 16 ♗d2 ♘e8 17 ♗xe6 fxe6 18 c3 ♘c6 (Black could consider 18...bxc3 19 bxc3 ♘c6) 19 ♘c4 ♘c7 20 ♗e3 ♗f6 was pretty solid for Black in Anand-Short, Amsterdam 1992.

We now return to 13...♗c8 *(D)*:

14 h3

White maintains the tension. 14 ♘d2 ♗g4 15 f3 ♗e6 16 ♘c4 ♘xc4 (or 16...♘c6) 17 ♗xc4 ♕d7 is fine for Black, while 14 c3 ♖b8



15 d4 gives Black a choice between 15...bxc3 16 bxc3 ♕c7 and 15...b3 16 ♗b1 ♕c7 in both cases with an unclear position.

14...♖b8

14...♗e6 15 ♗xe6 fxe6 16 c3 bxc3 17 bxc3 ♖b8 18 ♗e3 ♕d7 19 ♕c2 is supposed to be a little better for White based on the game Chandler-Tal, London 1984, but the position is probably not so bad for Black; it is very similar to some in Chapter 9. One possibility here is 19...c4!?.

15 ♘d2

White can also play 15 ♗d2, which transposes to note 'a' to White's 13th move.

15...♗e6

This is the most common, but Black has also tried 15...♘e8 16 ♘c4 ♘xc4 17 ♗xc4 and now both 17...♗g5 and 17...♘c7 have been played, while 17...g6, intending ...♘g7, is also possible.

16 ♘c4 ♘c6 *(D)*

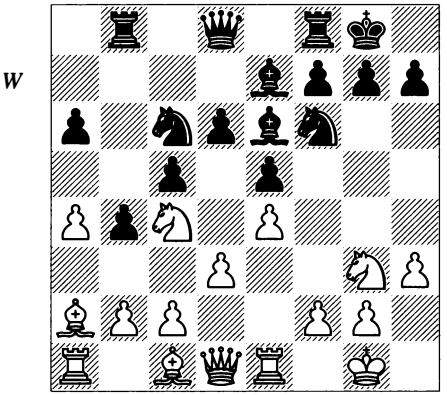
16...♘xc4 17 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 18 dxc4 has also been played with some success (drawing success, that is), but I think that Black should avoid this structure unless he gets something (like the bishop-pair) in return.

17 f4

This does not lead to much, but it is not easy for White to develop any kind of initiative.

17...exf4 18 ♗xf4 ♘e8

18...♖c8 19 ♘f5 (19 ♘e3!?) 19...♗xf5 20 exf5 d5 21 ♘e3 h6 22 ♗g3 ♖e8 = Yudasin-Kuporosov, USSR 1985. Black should be careful not to get overly ambitious: 18...♖b7 19 ♘e3 ♗xa2 20 ♖xa2 b3 21 cxb3 ♘d4? (21...g6) 22 ♘gf5 ♘xb3 23 ♘c4 ± Zapata-Gutierrez Carmona, Aguascalientes 2008 is one such cautionary tale.

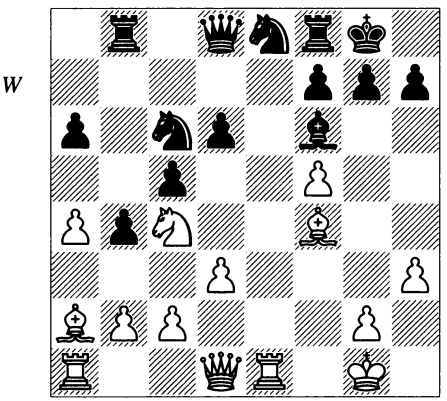


19 ♘f5 ♗xf5

This move was not mentioned in Nunn & Harding's book, but soon after it came out Nunn played it himself! Instead 19...♗f6 still looks satisfactory; for example, 20 ♖f1 (White gets nowhere with 20 ♘cxd6 ♗xb2 or 20 ♘fxd6? ♘xd6 21 ♘xd6 {21 ♗xd6 ♗xc4 ∓} 21...♗xb2 ∓) 20...♗xf5 21 exf5 d5!? 22 ♗xb8 ♕xb8! gives Black good compensation for the exchange.

20 exf5 ♗f6 *(D)*

20...♘d4 is also possible.



21 ♔h1 ♕d7 22 ♗h2 ♘d4 23 ♘e3 b3!? 24 ♗xb3 ♘xb3 25 cxb3 ♗xb2 26 ♖b1 ♗c3 27 ♖f1 ♗d4 28 ♘c2 ♗e5

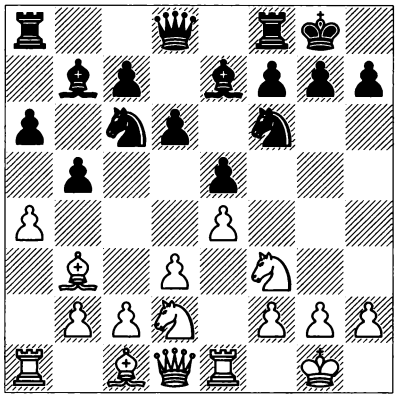
= Kindermann-Nunn, Bundesliga 1988/9.

C)

10 ♘bd2 *(D)*

It is this move that brought 8 a4 back into fashion when Kasparov adopted it in his 1993 World Championship match with Short.

B

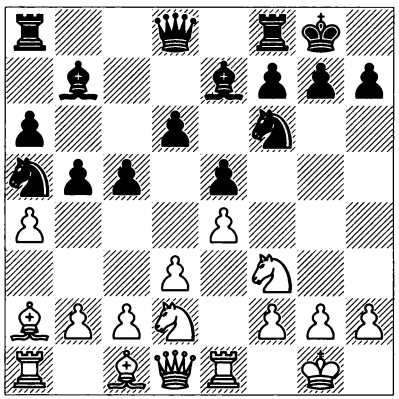


10...♘a5

We shall stick with the 'Chigorin' plan. Other moves are also common, such as 10...♘d7, 10...♖e8 and 10...♕d7. The 'Breyer' move 10...♘b8 is very rare for some reason; I do not see anything glaringly wrong with it.

11 ♗a2 c5 *(D)*

W



12 ♘f1

After 12 c3 ♕c7 13 ♘f1 Black has the familiar idea 13...c4!, undermining White's centre.

12...b4

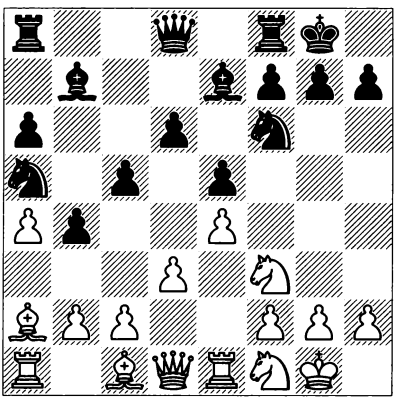
This is Black's usual choice. If White is going to play in the centre with an eventual c3 and d4, this ensures that Black can open some lines on the queenside. A couple of illustrations of the dangers Black can face in other lines:

a) 12...♖e8 13 ♘e3 g6 (13...h6 14 ♗d2 {White threatens 15 ♗xa5 ♕xa5 16 axb5 with the idea 16...axb5?? 17 ♗xf7+} 14...c4 15 ♗c3 ♕b6 16 ♘d2 gave White a comfortable plus in Kasparov-Leko, Linares 2001 because his pieces are much better coordinated) 14 ♗d2 b4 15 ♘g5 ♖f8 16 ♘g4 ♘xg4 17 ♕xg4 ♗c8 18 ♕h4 h5 19 ♕g3 ♔g7 20 ♗d5 ♖b8 21 h4 ♕d7 22 ♕e3 ♗b7 23 ♘h7! gave White a winning attack in Kasparov-Vladimirov, Batumi rapid 2001.

b) 12...♗c8 13 c3 ♗d7 14 ♘e3 ♕c7 15 axb5 axb5 16 b4! pushed Black's knight back in Leko-Ivanchuk, Morelia/Linares 2006. The point is that 16...cxb4 17 cxb4 ♘c6 can be met with 18 ♗xf7+!, as indicated by Leko. After 18...♔xf7 19 ♕b3+ ♔g6 20 ♘h4+ ♔h5 21 ♕d1+ White has a decisive attack.

We now return to 12...b4 *(D)*:

W



13 ♘e3

Or:

a) 13 c3 bxc3 (illogical is 13...♖b8?! 14 cxb4 cxb4 15 ♗d2 ±) 14 bxc3 c4! 15 ♘g3 transposes to note 'b' to White's 13th move in Line B. Here White's knight has gone d2-f1-g3 instead of c3-e2-g3.

b) 13 ♘g3 transposes to Line B.

c) The other alternative, 13 ♗d2, does not look too dangerous. After 13...♖b8 14 ♘e3 ♗c8 15 ♘c4 ♘c6 16 h3 ♖e8 17 ♘e3 ♘c7 18 ♘d5 ♗e6 19 ♘xc7 (19 c3 ♗f6 was also fine for Black in Lutz-Beliavsky, Bundesliga 2002/3) 19...♕xc7 20 ♗c4 ♕c8 21 b3 h6 22 ♗c1 f5 23 ♕e2 f4 Black was doing well in Hraček-Beliavsky, Bundesliga 2002/3.

13...♗c8 14 ♘d2

14 ♘c4 transposes to Section 8.1, with both sides losing two tempi! Here Black has lost time playing ...♗b7-c8 and White has lost time playing ♘d2-f1-e3-c4 instead of ♘b1-d2-c4.

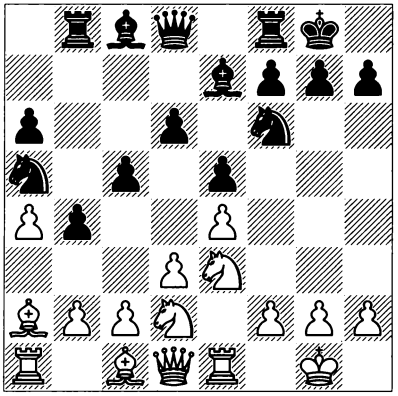
White may also try 14 c3. After 14...♖b8 (14...bxc3 15 bxc3 ♖b8 is also possible) 15

cxb4 (15 ♘d2 ♗e6 16 ♘d5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♗d7 18 ♘c4 ♘xc4 19 ♗xc4 a5 20 cxb4 ♖xb4 21 b3 ♗g5 was also very comfortable for Black in Geller-Xie Jun, Vienna 1993) 15...♖xb4 16 ♗d2 ♖b8 17 ♗c3 ♘c6 18 ♘d2 ♗e6 19 ♗c4 ♕c8! (better than 19...a5?! 20 ♘b1! intending ♘a3-b5 ±) 20 a5 ♗d8 21 ♕a4 ♘b4 22 ♖ec1 ♘h5! 23 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 24 ♗xb4 ♖xb4 25 ♕d1 ♘f4 gave Black the initiative in Ivkov-Xie Jun, Vienna 1993.

14...♖b8 *(D)*

A sensible alternative is 14...♗e6 15 ♘dc4 ♘c6.

W



15 ♘dc4

15 ♗c4 ♘xc4 16 dxc4 saddles Black with a backward d-pawn, but the bishop-pair should compensate for this. 16...♗e6 17 b3 ♖b7 gives the rook some scope along the second rank and prepares a knight manoeuvre. 18 ♖f1 ♘d7 19 ♕e2 ♘b8 20 ♘d5 ♘c6 21 ♗b2 ♗g5 22 ♖ad1 a5 23 f4 exf4 24 ♘xf4 ♗xf4 25 ♖xf4 f6 was equal in Svidler-Adams, FIDE Knockout, Moscow 2001.

15...♘c6 16 ♗d2 ♗e6 17 a5

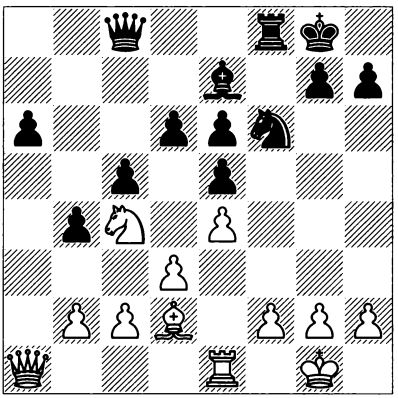
This leads to nothing, but White has trouble coming up with a plan.

17...♖b5

We have seen this idea in Section 8.1. Here the a5-pawn just drops off, but White has sufficient play to draw.

18 ♗b3 ♘xa5 19 ♘xa5 ♖xa5 20 ♗xe6 fxe6 21 ♘c4 ♖xa1 22 ♕xa1 ♕c8 *(D)*

W



23 ♕a2

White sets his sights on the e6-pawn and is able to force a repetition.

23...♕c6 24 ♘a5 ♕d7 25 ♘c4 ♕c6

Both 25...♖a8? and 25...♕c8? fail because of 26 ♘b6.

26 ♘a5 ♕d7 27 ♘c4

½-½ Milos-Adams, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

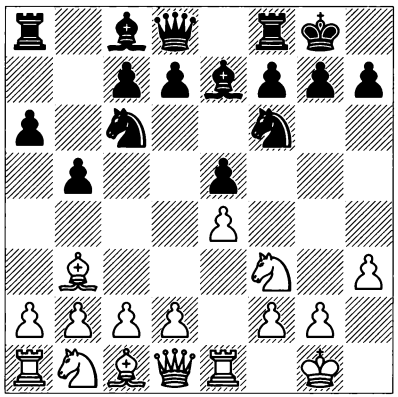
Conclusions

The Anti-Marshall with 8 a4 has lost a lot of its lustre because of the modern 8...b4, which is favoured by most top players. Black has just about perfected a healthy scheme of development with ...d6, ...♗e6, ...♕c8 and ...♖b8 which leaves White struggling to develop any initiative at all. The older 8...♗b7 is not seen as much nowadays, but it remains perfectly viable as well.

9 Anti-Marshall: 8 h3

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 h3 *(D)*

B



Since Black has come to terms with 8 a4, this has been a very popular Anti-Marshall line for the past decade. White makes a relatively useful move and is willing to transpose back into the main lines of the Ruy Lopez.

8...♗b7

This keeps things in the realm of the Anti-Marshall. Instead 8...d6 is certainly playable, but after 9 c3 we are back in the main lines of the Ruy Lopez. This position would normally come about via the move-order 7...d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3.

9 d3

After 9 c3?! Black gets an improved Marshall with 9...d5!. White has:

a) 10 d3 is passive. Black can exchange queens with 10...dxe4 or keep the tension with 10...♕d6. In both cases Black has easy equality.

b) 10 d4 gives Black a pleasant choice between 10...♘xe4 11 dxe5 ♘a5 12 ♗c2 ♗c5 and 10...dxe4 11 ♘xe5 ♘a5 12 ♗c2 c5.

c) 10 exd5 ♘xd5 and now:

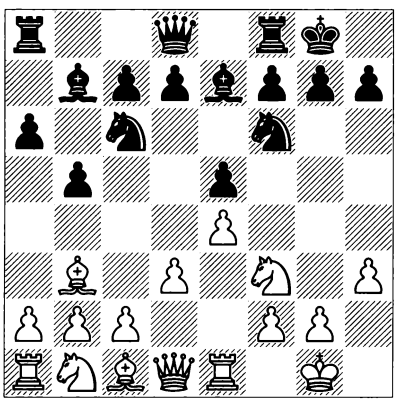
c1) 11 ♘xe5? ♘xe5 12 ♖xe5 ♘f4 gives Black a strong attack. For example, 13 d4 ♘xg2 14 ♕g4 ♘h4 ∓.

c2) 11 d4 exd4 12 cxd4 (12 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 13 ♕xd4 c5 ∓) 12...♗f6 13 ♘c3 ♘b6!? gives Black good play.

c3) 11 d3 is relatively best and will be considered in note 'c' to White's 11th move in Line A.

We now return to 9 d3 *(D)*:

B



Now that White has committed to 9 d3, the main line has always been 9...d6, but recently Black has also investigated the 'Marshall move' 9...d5!?. We shall look at both.

A: 9...d5!? 155
B: 9...d6 159

Black can also play 9...♖e8 or 9...h6, hoping either to relocate the e7-bishop before playing ...d6 or to get in ...d5 in one move, but we shall not examine those moves here.

A)

9...d5!? *(D)*

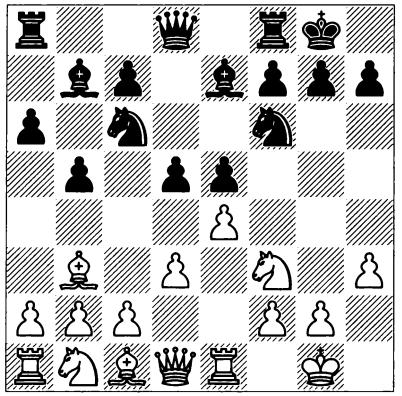
This gambit had always been considered suspect, but thanks to the efforts of I.Sokolov, Aronian, and especially Bacrot, this bold advance has become an active option for Black.

10 exd5 ♘xd5 11 ♘xe5

Taking the pawn is critical, but sometimes White chooses to decline:

a) 11 ♘c3 ♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♕d6 13 a4 ♘a5 14 ♗a3 c5 15 ♘xe5 ♘xb3 16 cxb3 ♗f6 17 d4 b4 18 cxb4 cxb4 19 ♗b2 ♕d5 20 f3 ♖fe8 with

W



compensation, Shomoev-Pashikian, European Ch, Budva 2009.

b) 11 ♘bd2 f6 (11...♘f4 12 ♘e4 ♘a5 13 ♗xf4 exf4 14 d4 ♕d7?! 15 ♘e5 ♕f5 16 ♕d3 ♖ad8 17 ♘c5 gave White the initiative in Topalov-Leko, Nanjing 2009) 12 c4 (or 12 ♘e4 ♔h8 13 d4 exd4 14 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 15 ♕xd4 ♖e8 16 ♗d2 ♘b6 = Shirov-Bacrot, Moscow blitz 2007) 12...bxc4 13 ♘xc4 ♗c5 14 ♘e3 ♘a5 15 d4 exd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘xb3 (or 16...♖e8!? =) 17 ♕xb3 ♗xd4 18 ♕xb7 ♗xe3 19 ♗xe3 ♕d7 20 ♖ad1 ♖fd8 21 ♕b3 ♖ab8 22 ♕a3 ♕b5 = Adams-Bacrot, FIDE Grand Prix, Baku 2008.

c) 11 c3 and here:

c1) 11...♗f6 12 ♘bd2!? ♘f4 13 ♘e4 ♘xd3 14 ♘xf6+ gxf6 15 ♖e4 ♘xc1 16 ♖g4+ ♔h8 17 ♕xc1 gave White good compensation for the pawn in Grishchuk-Aronian, World Ch, Mexico City 2007.

c2) 11...♕d7 offers up the pawn on e5 again. 12 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 13 ♖xe5 ♖ad8 14 ♕g4 f5 15 ♕g3 (after 15 ♕h5 ♗f6 16 ♖e1 ♔h8 17 ♗g5, Zagrebelny-Georgadze, Erevan Olympiad 1996, Georgadze suggests that 17...♕c6 18 f3 ♕b6+ is good for Black as 19 d4 c5 gives him the initiative) 15...♗f6 16 ♖e1 ♔h8 17 ♘d2 b4 gave Black counterplay in the game Topalov-Leko, Morelia/Linares 2008.

c3) 11...♕d6 is the most solid. 12 ♘bd2 ♖ad8 13 ♘e4 ♕g6 (or 13...♕d7 14 a4 ♔h8 15 axb5 axb5 16 d4 and now instead of 16...exd4 17 cxd4 ± Kamsky-Bacrot, Elista 2007, Black can choose 16...f5 17 ♘c5 ♗xc5 18 dxc5 e4 with counterplay) 14 ♘g3 ♘f4 (not 14...♗c5? 15 d4! exd4 16 ♘h4 ♕f6 17 ♘e4! ♕xh4 18 ♗g5 trapping the queen, but making a little room for the queen with 14...h6!? is possible) 15 ♗xf4 exf4 16 ♘e4 ♘a5 17 ♗c2 c5 gave Black good play in Mrdja-Djurić, Montecatini Terme 2005.

d) 11 a4 has been White's most recent attempt to cause trouble, but Black has had the last word: 11...♘d4! 12 ♘xd4 exd4 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 15 ♘a3 ♗b4! (Shipov gives both 15...♕d7 16 ♕g4! and 15...♗xa3 16 bxa3 c5 17 ♕g4 with the initiative for White) 16 ♖e5 (16 ♗d2 will transpose) 16...♗d6 17 ♖e1 ♗b4 18 ♗d2 ♗xd2 19 ♕xd2 ♕f6! (19...♗c6? 20 ♖e5 b4? 21 ♘b5! +– Leko-Yakovenko, FIDE Grand Prix, Elista 2008) and now:

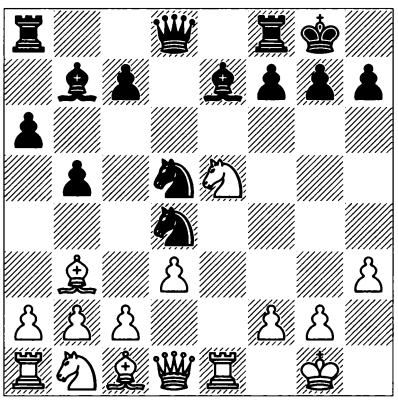
d1) 20 ♘xb5 ♘f4 gives Black sufficient play; for example, 21 f3 ♕h6! (21...♗xf3 22 gxf3 ♕h4 also leads to a draw) 22 ♔h2 (22 ♕f2? ♕g5 ∓ hits the knight on b5) 22...♗xf3! 23 gxf3 ♕xh3+ with a draw.

d2) After 20 ♗xd5 a draw was agreed in the game Kariakin-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2009. 20...♗xd5 21 ♘xb5 ♗xg2! 22 ♔xg2 ♕c6+ is level.

11...♘d4! *(D)*

This is the key move in Black's concept. 11...♘xe5?! 12 ♖xe5 ♗f6 13 ♖e1 c5 14 ♘d2 intending ♘e4 ± leaves Black struggling.

W



Black has a lead in development and can grab the bishop-pair with ...♘xb3. Chasing the bishop with ...a5 and ...a4 is another idea. Black may also be able to harass the e5-knight because retreating to f3 may be difficult because of the pressure of the d4-knight and b7-bishop. This becomes clearer when Black plays a quick ...♘b4, which not only unleashes the b7-bishop but also puts pressure on c2.

12 ♘c3

This is the most natural and testing move, but there are other options:

a) 12 ♘f3 ♘xb3 13 axb3 ♘b4 14 ♘bd2 ♖e8 15 d4 c5 16 c3 ♘d3 17 ♖e3 ♘f4 18 ♘f1 ♘e6 gave Black enough for the pawn in Brkić-Ivanisević, Bosnian Team Ch, Vogosca 2007.

b) 12 ♕g4 ♘xb3 13 axb3 f5 14 ♕f3 ♖b8 15 ♗f4?! ♗b4 16 ♖f1 (16 ♗d2 ♗xd2 17 ♘xd2 ♕g5! ∓ hits the d2-knight and threatens both 18...♘b4 and 18...♘e3) 16...g5 17 ♗d2 ♗xd2 18 ♘xd2 ♘f4 19 ♕e3 ♘xg2 (19...♗xg2!? 20 ♖fe1 ♖b6 21 h4 ♖h6 was recommended in *New in Chess*) 20 ♕g3 ♘f4 21 ♔h2 (21 ♖fe1 is a better try) 21...♘e2 22 ♕e3 ♘d4 ∓ Spoelman-I.Sokolov, Dutch Ch, Hilversum 2007.

c) 12 ♘d2 and now:

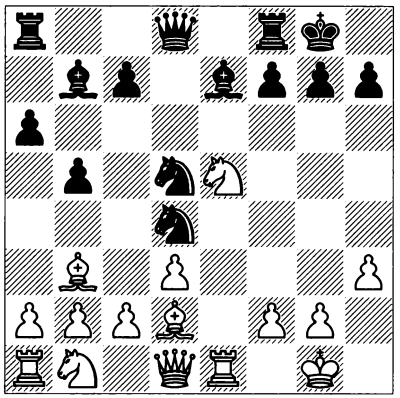
c1) 12...c5 13 a4 (13 ♘df3 ♘xb3 14 axb3 f6 15 ♘g4 ♖e8 16 ♗d2 ♕d7 17 c4 ♘c7 18 ♘h4 b4 19 ♖e3 ♗d6 20 ♖a5 f5 21 ♘h2 ♘e6 gave Black decent play for the pawn in Mamedov-Citak, Baku 2009) 13...♘f4 and now White should try 14 ♗xf7+!? ♖xf7 15 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 16 ♘e4 intending c3, as 14 ♘ef3? (Kariakin-Bacrot, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007) 14...♕d7!!, threatening 15...♘xh3+, favours Black, who can meet 15 ♘xd4 by 15...♗xg2!.

c2) 12...♖e8 13 ♘df3 (after 13 c3 ♘xb3 14 ♘xb3 c5 15 ♕h5 g6 16 ♕f3 f6 17 ♘xg6 hxg6 18 c4 ♕d7 19 cxd5 ♗xd5 20 ♕g3 g5, Black was doing well in Hou Yifan-Kosteniuk, Women's World Ch match (game 3), Nalchik 2008) 13...♘xb3 14 axb3 f6 15 ♘g4 ♕d7 16 ♗d2 c5 17 ♕e2 h5 18 ♘gh2 ♗d6 19 ♕f1 ½-½ Ivanchuk-Svidler, Foros 2008. White is very passive so Black has excellent compensation for the pawn.

d) 12 ♗d2 *(D)* looks passive, but Yakovenko used this move to beat Aronian, so it cannot be taken too lightly. Black has:

d1) 12...c5?! 13 ♘c3 ♘xb3 14 axb3 ♘b4 15 ♖c1 (this is a typical consolidating move: White protects the c2-pawn) 15...f6 16 ♘f3 (now this square is safe for White's knight because he can recapture with the queen in the event of any ...♗xf3 ideas) 16...♕c7 (no better is 16...f5 17 ♕e2 ♗f6 18 ♕e6+ ♔h8 19 ♘e5 ♗xe5 20 ♕xe5 ± Vučković-Pavlović, Serbian Ch, Mataruska Banja 2008) 17 ♘e4 ♖fe8 18 ♗xb4 cxb4 19 c4 bxc3 20 bxc3 ♗a3 21 ♖c2 ♖ad8 22 ♕a1 ♗f8 23 ♖ce2 ♖e7 24 ♘d4 ♖de8 25 b4 ± Yakovenko-Aronian, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007. White has consolidated his extra pawn and his knights have good squares in the centre.

B



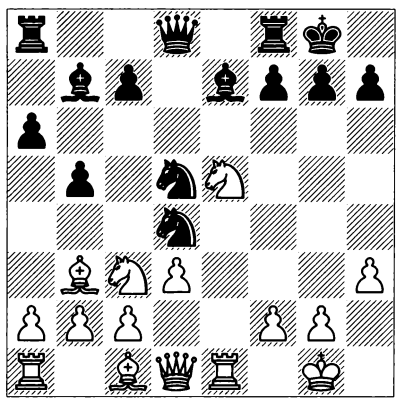
d2) 12...♕d6!? 13 ♘c3 ♘xb3 14 axb3 ♘b4 15 ♗f4 ♖ae8 16 ♘e4 ♕d5 gave Black reasonable compensation for the pawn in Parligras-Ivanisević, European Ch, Plovdiv 2008.

d3) 12...a5!? 13 ♘c3 ♘f6 intending ...a4 was suggested in *New in Chess Yearbook 86*.

d4) 12...♖e8 looks good. 13 ♘c3 ♘xb3 14 axb3 ♗d6 15 ♘f3 ♖xe1+ 16 ♘xe1 ♘f6 17 ♗g5 h6 18 ♗h4 g5 19 ♗g3 ♗xg3 20 fxg3 ♕d6 21 ♔h2 ♖e8 gave Black excellent play in Zhigalko-Pashikian, Martuni 2008.

We now return to 12 ♘c3 *(D)*:

B

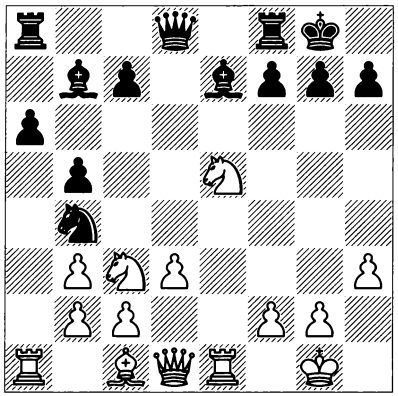


12...♘b4

This finesse has been popularized by Bacrot. Black refrains from capturing on b3 and maintains the tension. By retaining the d4-knight, Black keeps pressure on the f3-square, but allowing the b3-bishop to live means that Black must keep an eye on f7 too.

The alternative is to take right away, and sometimes the two moves will transpose. After the immediate 12...♘xb3 13 axb3 ♘b4 *(D)*, Black hopes that the bishop-pair and pressure on c2 will grant him sufficient compensation for the pawn.

W



White has:

a) 14 ♗e3 is covered in note 'a' to White's 13th move below.

b) 14 d4 ♖e8 15 ♗e3 ♗d6 (15...♕c8 was suggested by Quezada) 16 ♘d3 ♖e6 (16...♘xd3 17 ♕xd3 b4 18 ♘a4 ♗e4 19 ♕e2 ♕f6, with compensation, is given by Quezada) 17 d5 (17 f3! is a little better for White according to Quezada) 17...♘xd5 18 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 19 ♘f4 ♗xf4 20 ♗xf4 ♖xe1+ 21 ♕xe1 c6 was drawn in Quezada-P.H.Nielsen, Capablanca Memorial, Havana 2007.

c) 14 ♗f4 ♕d4 15 ♗g3 ♗d6 (15...♖ae8!?) 16 ♘e2 ♕c5!? (after 16...♕xb2 17 c3 ♖fe8 18 ♖b1 White has a repetition but I do not see anything more than that) 17 c3 ♗xe5 18 ♗xe5 ♕xe5 19 cxb4 ♖ad8 20 ♕d2 (despite White's 'Irish pawns' he maintains some initiative because he can use the c-file) 20...♖d7 21 ♖ac1 h6 22 ♖c5 ♕d6 23 ♘f4 g5 24 ♘h5 ♕g6 25 ♘g3 ♖xd3 26 ♕c1 ♗d5 27 ♖xc7 ♖xb3 28 ♕c5 ± Gormally-Beliavsky, European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008.

d) 14 ♗d2 intends to cover c2 with ♖c1 to allow ♘f3, so Black should act immediately: 14...f6 15 ♘g4 (Black's compensation is obvious after 15 ♘f3 ♗xf3 16 gxf3 ♕d7) and now 15...f5 is also a typical advance. Black relinquishes the e5-square but the f-pawn may play an important role. 16 ♘e5 ♗d6 and now:

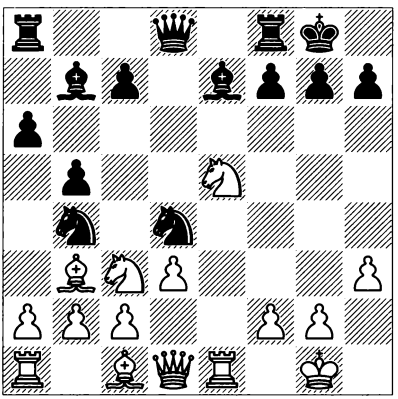
d1) 17 ♘a2 ♗xe5! (Black gains time with this capture) 18 ♖xe5 ♘c6 19 ♖e1 f4 20 ♗c3 (Sokolov gives the line 20 f3?! ♘d4 21 ♘c3 ♗xf3 22 gxf3 ♕g5+ 23 ♔f1 ♕g3 24 ♘e4 ♕xh3+ 25 ♔f2 ♕h2+ 26 ♔f1 ♖ae8! with a winning attack) 20...f3 21 ♖e4 a5 22 b4 axb4 23 ♘xb4 ♖xa1 24 ♕xa1 ♘xb4 (Black could try 24...♘e7 25 ♖g4 ♘g6 – Sokolov) 25 ♖xb4 fxg2 26 ♖g4 ♖f7 27 ♕a7 = Timofeev-I.Sokolov, Sarajevo 2007. Here the simplest would be 27...♕a8 with a likely draw.

d2) 17 d4 ♕h4 (17...c5 18 dxc5 ♗xc5 looks like it gives Black sufficient play for the pawn) 18 ♘e2 f4 (18...♕e4 is a typical idea, but 19 ♘f4 ♕xc2 20 ♗xb4 ♕xd1 21 ♖exd1 ♗xb4 22 ♘e6! looks a little better for White) 19 f3 ♘d5 was Ki.Georgiev-Ivanisević, Valjevo 2007, but this does not look so trustworthy to me after 20 ♕c1 covering the e3-square.

Despite the popularity of 12...♘b4, the immediate 12...♘xb3 still looks quite playable.

We return to 12...♘b4 *(D)*:

W



13 ♘e4

It is not so easy to shake off Black's pressure:

a) 13 ♗e3 ♘xb3 14 axb3 ♗d6 (14...f6 15 ♘f3 ♗xf3 16 gxf3 f5 {16...♕d7, with compensation, has also been played a couple of times} 17 ♘e2 ♗d6 18 f4 ♕h4 gave Black the initiative in Prasad-Negi, New Delhi 2007) 15 ♗d2 ♖e8 16 d4?! (this allows a typical trick, so 16 ♘e4!? is a better try) 16...♕h4! 17 ♘e2 ♕e4! 18 ♘f4 ♕xc2 19 ♗xb4 ♕xd1 20 ♖exd1 ♗xb4 ∓ Kasimdzhanov-Bacrot, Mainz rapid 2007. Black has recovered the pawn and has the bishop-pair.

b) 13 ♗d2?! ♗d6 14 ♘g4 (Black has compensation after either 14 ♘e4 ♘bxc2! 15 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 16 ♗xc2 ♗e5 or 14 ♖c1 ♘xb3 15 axb3 ♖e8) 14...♘xb3 15 axb3 f5! 16 ♘h2 (after 16 ♘e5 ♖e8 17 d4 both 17...♕h4 and 17...c5 give Black good play) 16...♕f6 17 ♖c1 ♕g6 18 ♘f3 ♖ae8 19 ♘h4 ♕f6 20 ♘f3 ♖xe1+ 21 ♗xe1 ♕h6 ∓ Lutz-Bacrot, Bundesliga 2007/8.

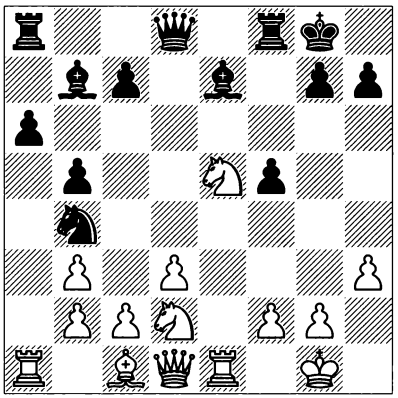
c) 13 ♗f4!? c5?! (it is probably better to play 13...♘xb3 14 axb3, transposing to note 'b' to Black's 12th move) 14 ♖c1 ♗d6 15 ♘e4 ♘xb3 16 axb3 ♗e7 (if 16...♗xe5? 17 ♗xe5 ♕d5?, then 18 ♘f6+! wins instantly) 17 ♘g3 was Kasimdzhanov-Bacrot, Mainz rapid 2007. White has developed reasonably well, so it is not clear what Black has for the pawn.

13...♘xb3 14 axb3 f5

14...♕d5?! 15 ♘f3 ♕d7 allows White to consolidate by 16 ♗d2! f5 17 ♘eg5 ♖fe8 18 ♘e5 ♕d5 19 ♘gf3 (taking over the centre) 19...♕d6 20 d4 ♗e4 21 ♗xb4 ♕xb4 22 ♘d3 ♕d6 23 ♘c5 ♗d5 24 ♕d3 ± Nijboer-Gupta, Wijk aan Zee 2009. White has an extra pawn and the better position.

15 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



15...♗f6

After 15...♗d6 16 ♘df3 Black should probably transpose to the next note with 16...♗xe5, because 16...c5?! 17 ♗d2 ♘d5 (Matsenko-Khrushchov, Cheliabinsk 2008) can be met by 18 ♘g5! ♕c8 19 ♕h5 ♘f6 20 ♕h4 h6 21 ♘gf3 ±.

16 ♘df3 ♖e8?!

This has been chosen by some strong players, but I believe that this is the time to look for an improvement in Black's play. A couple of ideas:

a) 16...♕d6 17 d4 ♗e4 18 ♖e2 ♖ad8 (Black could try 18...♘c6 or 18...c5) 19 c3 ♗xe5?! 20 ♘xe5 ♘c2 21 ♖xe4 ♘xa1 22 ♖e1 ♕d5 23 ♗g5 ♘xb3 24 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 25 ♘d3 was much better for White in B.Vučković-M.Vujić, European Ch, Budva 2009 because of White's central grip and Black's poorly placed knight.

b) 16...c5!? is also possible. The point is to protect the knight on b4, so that after 17 ♗d2 Black can play 17...♗xf3 18 ♘xf3 (18 ♕xf3? leaves c2 hanging, while 18 gxf3 ♕d5 gives Black obvious compensation for the pawn) 18...♗xb2 19 ♖b1 ♗f6, when he is not too badly off.

c) Another idea is the direct 16...♗xe5!? 17 ♘xe5 (17 ♖xe5 ♗xf3 again forces the ugly 18 gxf3) 17...♕d5 18 ♘f3 (18 f3 ♕c5+ wins the c2-pawn) 18...♕d7 intending ...♗xf3, which is not so easy for White to meet.

17 ♗d2

17 c3?! ♗xe5 18 ♖xe5 (18 ♘xe5 ♕d5 19 ♘f3 ♘xd3 ∓) 18...♕xd3 was certainly no problem for Black in Matsenko-Kurnosov, Satka 2008.

17...c5 18 d4 ♗xe5

Perhaps Black should bring back the knight to fight for the centre with 18...♘c6!?.

19 ♘xe5?!

After this move, Black just takes back the pawn and has no problems at all. Mikhalevski suggests that White should try 19 ♖xe5!. After 19...♗xf3 20 gxf3 the pressure on c5 induces Black to play 20...♖xe5, and after 21 dxe5 White can follow up with f4 and ♗e3.

19...♕xd4 20 ♗xb4 ♕xd1 21 ♖axd1 cxb4 22 ♘d3 ♖xe1+ 23 ♖xe1 ♖c8

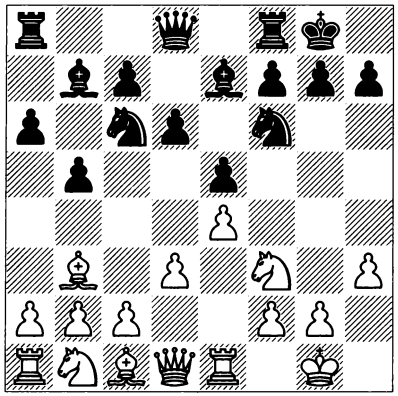
= Timofeev-Yakovenko, Russian Ch, Moscow 2008.

B)

9...d6 *(D)*

In playing 9...d6, Black indicates that he is willing to play along more typical Ruy Lopez lines now that White has committed to 9 d3. This makes 8 h3 look rather non-critical – in normal Ruy Lopez lines this move is played to avoid the pin ...♗g4 in preparation for advancing by d4. Now that Black has secured his e5-pawn, he is threatening to grab the bishop-pair with ...♘a5. Thus White's next move.

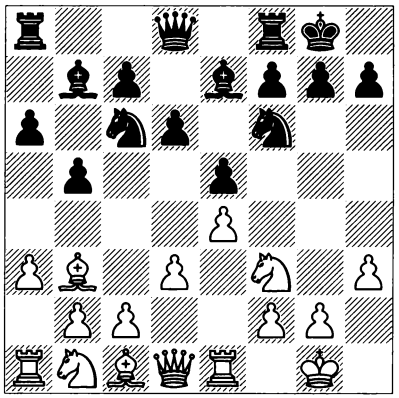
W



10 a3 *(D)*

10 c3 transposes to the Pilnik Variation with White having played h3 rather early, which makes the line even more harmless. As mentioned previously, this is well covered in *The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black.*

B



White's play is very flexible, but it is also very slow. I find it very difficult to believe that moves such as 8 h3, 9 d3, and 10 a3 can constitute any kind of threat to the 7...0-0 move-order. White now has two plans of development, depending on how he develops his queen's knight. It most often develops to d2, from where it will usually go to f1 and then either e3 or g3. The alternative is to develop to c3 with an eye towards d5, which often leads to exchanges. The knight may also go to g3 via e2, but this is less flexible than the ♘d2-f1 route.

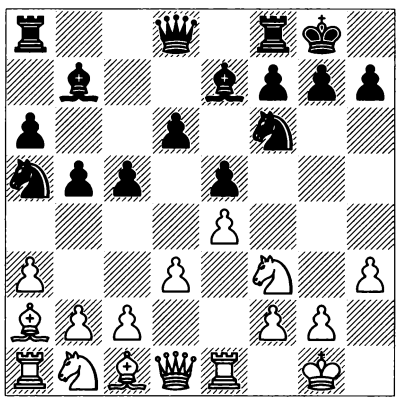
10...♘a5

Black has four main ways to arrange his pieces. He can develop in 'Chigorin' style with ...♘a5 and ...c5, in 'Breyer' style with ...♘b8 and ...♘bd7, or in 'Zaitsev' style with ...♖e8 and ...♗f8. The alternative is to regroup with ...♕d7 and ...♘d8, which enables Black to play ...c6 and ...♘e6. All of these plans are quite viable and the choice is largely a matter of taste (or experience, if Black has played any of these other defences).

For a few reasons, we shall focus on the first of these options. It is the most classical method and fits well with the best defences to other slow systems such as the Pilnik Variation mentioned above. I also think that is the easiest system to conceptualize, because Black's piece configurations are natural in the sense that they are designed to fight for the centre. Lastly, I have chosen this system because it fights for space. In the main lines of the Ruy Lopez mentioned above (Chigorin, Breyer, Zaitsev) White quickly plays d4 and has a space advantage in the centre. In the Anti-Marshall this is not the case, and I think Black should take advantage of this by fighting for space himself, and 10...♘a5 best suits this purpose.

11 ♗a2 c5 *(D)*

W



Black has gained space but somewhat weakened the d5-square. Now White must decide how to develop his pieces. Practice has shown that is not so easy for White to win the d5-square. Because Black has the same pieces that White does, he can eventually focus all of them (except the e7-bishop, of course) to fight for this square. Some lines have some similarity to the Anti-Sveshnikov line 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 e5. Despite the apparently drastic weakening of d5, Black has resources to fight for the centre. Because this one-sided approach does

not give Black difficult problems to solve, White often prefers a manoeuvring game where there is more scope to outplay the opponent. We examine:

B1: 12 ♘c3 161
B2: 12 ♘bd2 164

B1)

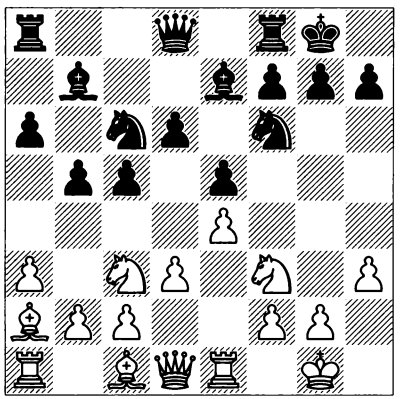
12 ♘c3

White takes aim at the d5-square, but this does not trouble Black too much, even after his next move.

12...♘c6 *(D)*

The knight heads back to the centre and eyes the d4-square. This loosens Black's control of d5 for the moment, but Black has sufficient resources to fight for the centre.

W



Now White has a few continuations to choose from:

B11: 13 ♗g5 161
B12: 13 ♘h2 162
B13: 13 ♘d5 163

There are some alternatives, none particularly dangerous:

a) 13 ♗d2 does not look very threatening. 13...♘d4 14 ♘xd4 cxd4 15 ♘e2 d5 16 ♘g3 (White's initiative was short-lived after 16 exd5 ♗xd5 17 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 18 ♘f4 ♕c5 19 ♗b4 ♕c7 = in Holzke-Shomoev, Cappelle la Grande 2003) 16...dxe4 17 dxe4 ♗c8 (17...g6 18 ♗h6 ♖e8 also looks fine) 18 c3 ♗c5 19 ♕f3 ♗e6 20 ♘f5 ♖c8 21 ♖ed1 ♖e8 22 cxd4 ♗xd4 23 ♗e3 ♗xf5 24 ♕xf5 g6 25 ♕f3 ♕b6 = Topalov-Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2008.

b) 13 ♖b1 is an odd move. White may play for a b4 advance, but this is not likely to terrify Black. 13...♖c8 14 ♗d2 ♘d4 15 b4 and now 15...♘xf3+?! 16 ♕xf3 c4?! 17 dxc4 bxc4 18 ♕e2 ♕c7 19 ♗g5 left Black with problems with the c4-pawn and the d5-square in Kamsky-Bacrot, Sofia 2006. Black can improve with 15...♕c7!. This overprotects the e5-pawn and puts pressure on the c-file and gives Black a good game.

c) 13 ♘e2 heads for g3, but this is less flexible than manoeuvring with ♘bd2-f1-g3 because the knight is in White's way on e2 and the e3-square is not an option. 13...♗c8 14 ♘g3 ♗e6 and now:

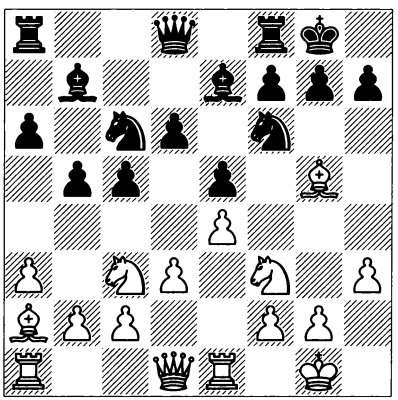
c1) 15 ♘f5 ♗xf5! 16 exf5 ♕d7 17 g4 h6 18 c3 ♖fe8 19 b4 cxb4 20 cxb4 ♗d8! 21 ♗b2 a5 gave Black the initiative in Gelfand-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2002.

c2) 15 c3 ♕d7 (15...♕c7, anticipating the opening of the c-file, is also possible) 16 d4 ♗xa2 17 ♖xa2 ♖fe8 18 b4 exd4 19 cxd4 c4!? 20 ♗d2 and now instead of 20...a5 21 d5 ♘e5 22 ♘xe5 dxe5 23 bxa5 ♗d8 24 a4 ♗xa5 25 axb5 ♕xb5 26 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 27 ♖c2 ± Megaranto-Nguyen Anh Dung, Doha 2006, Black could try 20...d5 with the idea 21 e5 ♘e4 22 ♘xe4 dxe4 23 ♖xe4 f5! with good counterplay.

B11)

13 ♗g5 *(D)*

B



This intends to fight for control of d5. We shall see the same idea again in Line B2.

13...♕d7!

This looks better than 13...♘d7 14 ♗d2 ♘b6 15 ♘d5 (15 ♘e2 ♗c8 16 b4 and now 16...c4?! 17 ♗e3 ♗e6 18 ♘c3 ♖c8 19 ♗xb6 ♕xb6 20 dxc4 bxc4 21 ♘d5 gave White a nice initiative in Gashimov-Beliavsky, Caleta 2009, but Black could try 16...♗e6) 15...♘xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♕c7 and now both 17 b4 and 17 c3 gave White some advantage in two games from the mini-match Bologan-Bacrot, Odessa rapid 2007.

14 ♘h2

14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♘d5 ♗d8 intending ...♘e7 is fine for Black, who can successfully fight for the d5-square.

14...♘e8

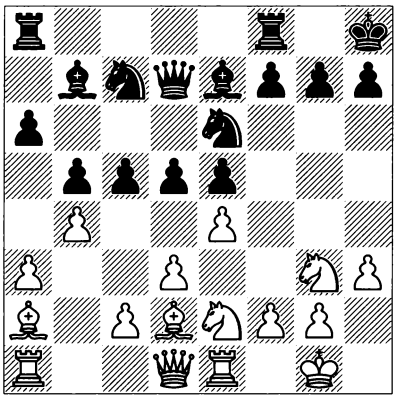
This is a typical manoeuvre. The knight heads to c7 where it controls d5. 14...♔h8!? intending ...♘g8 has also been tried.

15 ♗d2 ♘c7 16 ♘f1 ♔h8 17 ♘g3

17 ♘e3 ♗g5 is fine for Black.

17...♘d4 18 ♘ce2 ♘de6 19 b4 d5! *(D)*

W



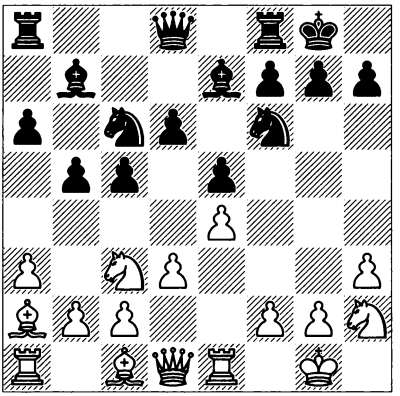
Black's pieces are all well placed, so striking in the centre is natural. 20 bxc5 ♗xc5 21 ♗b4 ♖fe8 22 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 23 ♘c3 ♖ad8 24 ♕h5 f6 gave Black an excellent position in Kasparov-Adams, Linares 1999.

B12)

13 ♘h2 *(D)*

This is a common idea in many lines of the Closed Ruy Lopez – the knight can go to g4, where it may either eliminate the f6-knight or head to e3 and d5. However, here White does not have the space in the centre that he usually enjoys. Because Black can play in the centre, this manoeuvre looks rather slow.

B



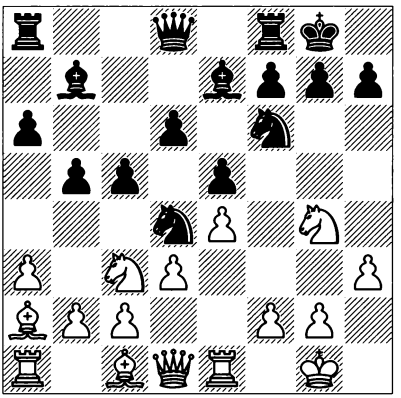
13...♘d4 14 ♘g4 *(D)*

Or:

a) 14 ♘f1 a5!? 15 a4 b4 16 ♘b1?! (16 ♘e2 and 16 ♘b5!? both look like better tries) 16...d5 17 ♗g5 c4!? (17...dxe4 18 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 19 dxe4 ♗c6 ∓) 18 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 19 dxc4 dxe4 20 ♘bd2 was murky in Bologan-Adams, French Team Ch, Bordeaux 2003.

b) 14 ♗g5 is another attempt to fight for the d5-square. White would like to capture on f6 and then manoeuvre his knights. 14...♘d7! 15 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 16 ♘d5 ♕g5 (Black does not mind losing a little time because he can still fight for d5, but 16...♗xd5!? 17 ♗xd5 ♖ab8 18 c3 ♘e6 19 ♘f3 ♘f4 also looked fine for Black in Wahls-G.Ginsburg, Wiesbaden 1996) 17 c3 ♘e6 18 ♘f3 ♕d8 19 a4 ♘f6 with equality, Ponomariov-Aronian, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006.

B



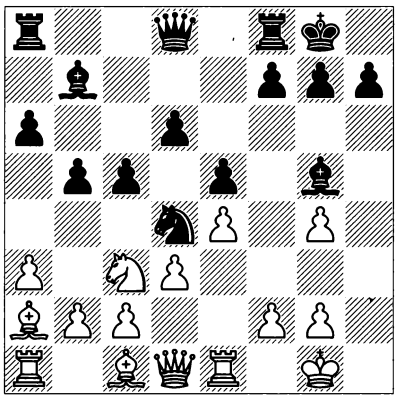
14...♘xg4

Usually Black avoids making this exchange, but here White is unlikely to be able to use the

h-file or g4-pawn to create a kingside attack. Also possible is 14...♔h8, as played in Inarkiev-Lastin, Krasnodar 2002.

15 hxg4 ♗g5! *(D)*

W



Black trades off his inferior bishop and blocks White's play on the queenside. The chances are balanced; for example, 16 ♘d5 ♗c8!? 17 c3 ♘c6 18 g3 ♗xc1 19 ♖xc1 ♗e6 20 ♔g2 ♘e7 21 d4 ♖c8 was equal in Leko-Grishchuk, Cap d'Agde rapid 2003 or 16 ♗d5 ♖b8 17 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 18 ♘d5 g6 19 c3 ♗xc1 20 ♖xc1 ♘e6 21 g3 ♕g5 22 ♘e3 ♔g7 23 ♔g2 h5 24 ♖h1 (24 gxh5 ♖h8 25 hxg6? ♘f4+ is much better for Black) 24...hxg4 25 ♕xg4 ♕xg4 26 ♘xg4 f5, Stefansson-Beliavsky, European Ch, Warsaw 2005.

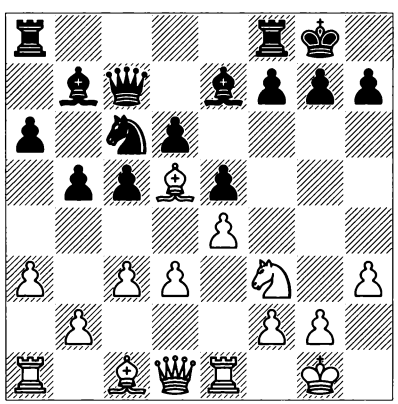
B13)

13 ♘d5

This is the most direct move.

13...♘xd5 14 ♗xd5 ♕c7 15 c3 *(D)*

B



White has conquered the d5-square for the moment, but Black has pieces that can control the light squares too.

15...♘b8!

Black exchanges off White's strong bishop. His knight may return to c6 or even head to d7, from where it can control d5 from f6 or b6. White's remaining knight is a long way from d5 and the position is relatively closed, so Black can take the time to do this. 15...♘a5 is also possible, although after 16 b4! ♗xd5 17 exd5 ♘b7 the knight is out of play. It is also difficult to understand 15...♔h8 16 b4 ♖ac8 17 ♗e3 ♘d8 18 a4 ± Navara-Berezjuk, Czech Ch, Luhačovice 2003.

16 ♗xb7 ♕xb7

Black has not experienced much trouble from this position. He has enough space and the d5-square is under control. White's bishop looks somewhat better than Black's, but the pawn-structure is not completely fixed yet and Black has a safe, flexible position.

17 d4

White can also manoeuvre his knight with 17 ♘h2, and here:

a) 17...♘c6 allows White to realize his idea, but 18 ♘g4 f5 19 ♘e3 f4 20 ♘d5 ♗d8 intending ...♘e7 was fine for Black in Bologan-Zviagintsev, Poikovsky 2004.

b) 17...♘d7 18 ♘g4 (18 ♘f1 looks a little more flexible, although 18...♖fe8 {after the natural 18...♘f6 19 ♕f3! intending ♗g5 and ♘e3, White has a pull} 19 ♘e3 ♗f8 gave Black a solid position in Djukić-Antić, Serbian Ch, Kopaonik 2005) 18...♘f6 19 ♘e3 g6 20 b3 ♖ab8 (mysterious) 21 ♗b2 ♖fd8 22 ♕f3 d5, Shirov-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2007. Black has more space and it is now White who should be a little careful.

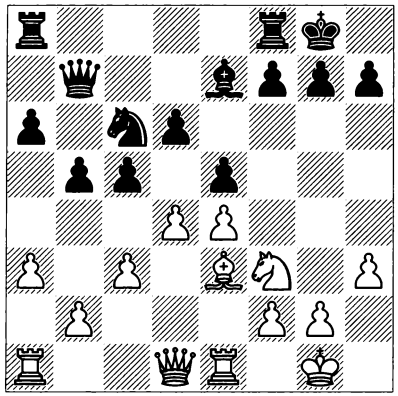
17...♘c6

Also playable is 17...♘d7!? 18 dxe5 dxe5 19 c4 (else ...c4 and ...♘c5, but now Black will get play on the b-file and his own knight can head for d4) 19...bxc4 20 ♕e2 ♖fd8 21 a4 (21 ♕xc4 ♕b5) 21...♖ab8 22 ♘d2 ♘f8 23 ♘xc4 ♘e6!? 24 ♘xe5 ♘d4 25 ♕c4 ♗d6 26 ♘f3 ♕b3 27 ♕xb3 ♖xb3, when Black had compensation for the pawn in Nijboer-Sargisian, European Ch, Istanbul 2003.

18 ♗e3 *(D)*

18...♖fd8

B



18...exd4 19 cxd4 ♗f6! gave Black counterplay in Lutz-Kasimdzhanov, Bundesliga 2003/4; e.g., 20 dxc5 ♗xb2 21 ♖a2 ♗c3 22 ♖ee2 dxc5 23 ♗xc5 ♖fd8 24 ♕b3 ♗d4 (Kasimdzhanov).

19 ♕e2

After 19 d5 both 19...♘a5 and 19...♘b8 look OK for Black. With two sets of minor pieces exchanged, Black has enough space and can create play with ...c4 intending ...♘d7-c5.

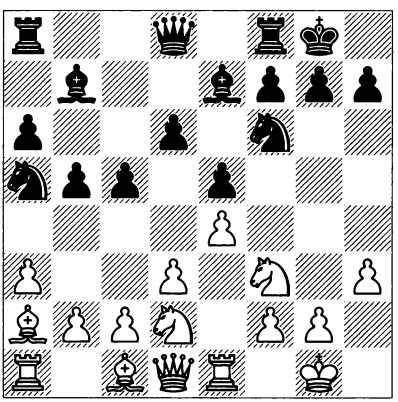
19...♘a5 20 ♘d2 cxd4 21 cxd4 ♖ac8 22 ♖ac1 ♖xc1 23 ♖xc1 ♖c8

= Iordachescu-Aronian, European Ch, Istanbul 2003.

B2)

12 ♘bd2 *(D)*

B



This is much more flexible than 12 ♘c3. The knight heads for f1, from where it can go to either g3 or e3, and White keeps the option of playing a quick c3 and d4. Black's best plan is to play ...♘c6 and the rather surprising ...♗c8 and ...♗e6. From e6 Black will cover the d5- and f5-squares and challenge White's strong a2-bishop. This costs Black some time, but this need not be fatal – White is spending a lot of time on lengthy manoeuvres as well. If White exchanges bishops on e6, Black's doubled pawns will control important central squares and Black will have an open f-file.

12...♘c6

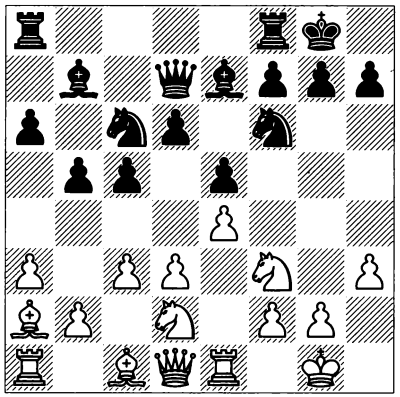
Black can also play 12...♗c8 immediately, but this requires more delicate handling because for the moment both of Black's queenside minor pieces are away from the centre. 13 c3 and now:

a) 13...♗e6 14 ♗xe6 fxe6 15 b4! (15 d4 ♘c6 16 dxc5 dxc5 was very solid for Black in Timoshenko-Aronian, Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2004) 15...♘c6 (15...cxb4 16 axb4 ♘c6 has also been played, but there is no real reason to exchange these pawns) 16 ♕b3 ♕c8 17 bxc5 dxc5 18 a4 ♖b8 19 axb5 axb5, Akopian-Beliavsky, Calvia Olympiad 2004. Now Beliavsky gives 20 ♗b2 intending c4, when the e5-pawn is rather weak.

b) 13...♘c6 14 d4 cxd4 (also of interest are 14...c4, Shirov-Anand, Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2004, and 14...♗d7, Lutz-Anand, Bundesliga 2003/4) 15 cxd4 exd4 16 ♘b3 d3! (16...♗e6 17 ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 18 ♘xd4 ♗xa2 19 ♖xa2 ± Topalov-Shirov, Bastia rapid 2003 gives White a pleasant advantage) 17 ♗f4 (Black's point is that 17 ♕xd3 can be met with 17...♗e6 18 ♘bd4 ♘e5! =) 17...♗b7 18 ♕xd3 ♘e5 19 ♘xe5 dxe5 20 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 21 ♗xe5 ♘xe4 was seen in both Kasparov-Bacrot, Armenia-RoW, Moscow 2004 and Cheparinov-Navara, Wijk aan Zee 2006. White has a tiny edge at most perhaps, but Black has no real prospects of his own.

13 ♘f1

After 13 c3, 13...♗c8 transposes to line 'b' above, while 13...d5 was suggested by Khalifman, reasoning that, compared to a regular Marshall, White has played the slow moves c3, a3, and ♗a2, while Black has managed to play ...c5. After 14 exd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16 ♖xe5 ♗f6 Black has an active position. Whether this is worth a pawn is another matter, and it has not yet been tried in grandmaster practice, possibly because Leko's idea 13...♕d7! *(D)* is highly attractive.

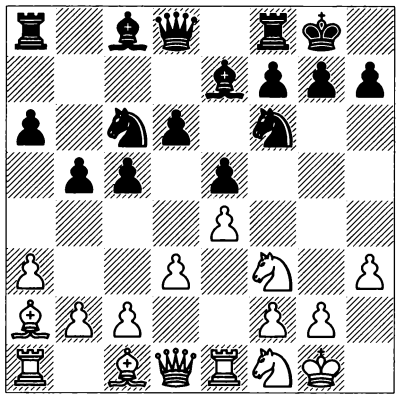


This connects the rooks and allows the possibility of ...♗d8 and even ...♘e7. Black may also contemplate ...d5, even at the cost of a pawn because he has a lead in development. 14 ♘f1 (after 14 a4 Black should probably not abandon the a-file with 14...♖ae8?! 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♕b3! ♘a5 17 ♕c2 ♘c6 18 ♕b3 ♘a5 19 ♕c2 ♘c6 20 ♘f1 d5 21 ♘e3 ± Inarkiev-Gustafsson, Greek Team Ch, Ermioni Argolidas 2006 but instead prefer something like 14...♖fe8 or even 14...♗d8!?) 14...d5!? 15 exd5 (15 ♗g5 dxe4 16 dxe4 c4 17 ♘e3 ♖fd8 18 ♘f5 ♕e6 19 ♕e2 ♗f8 20 ♗b1 h6 ∓ ½-½ Kramnik-Leko, World Ch match (game 6), Brissago 2004) 15...♘xd5 and now:

a) Declining the pawn by 16 ♘g3 should not be dangerous. 16...♖ad8?! (this is a bit careless; 16...f6 looks fine for Black) 17 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 18 ♖xe5 ♗d6?! (now bringing the rook to d8 looks nonsensical) 19 ♖e1 ♗xg3 20 fxg3 ♘f6 21 ♗e3 ♖fe8 22 ♕c2 ♕c6 23 ♖e2 ♖e7 24 ♖ae1 ♖de8 25 g4 h6 26 c4 ± Kariakin-Grishchuk, European Clubs Cup, Kemer 2007.

b) 16 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♗f6 18 ♖e1 ♖ae8 19 ♘g3 (19 ♗d2 and 19 ♖xe8 are also possible) 19...♘xc3! 20 bxc3 ♗xc3 21 ♗e3 (after 21 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 22 ♗e3, instead of 22...♗xa1?! 23 ♕xa1 ♕xd3 24 ♗xc5 ± Smirnov-Ovechkin, Internet rapid 2004, Black should play 22...♕c6 23 ♘e4 ♗xa1 24 ♕xa1 c4 25 f3 ♕g6!?, with unclear play, as given by Onishchuk) 21...♗xe1 22 ♕xe1 ♕xd3 23 ♕f1 was Akopian-Onishchuk, Calvia Olympiad 2004. Now Onishchuk gives 23...♖xe3 24 fxe3 ♕xe3+ 25 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 26 ♔xf2 ♖d8 27 ♖e1 ♔f8 with a slight advantage for Black.

13...♗c8! *(D)*



Black continues with his plan: the bishop will come to e6. White has three important moves:

B21: 14 c3 165
B22: 14 ♗g5 166
B23: 14 ♘e3 167

B21)

14 c3

This is the most direct. White begins actions in the centre.

14...♗e6 15 ♗xe6 fxe6 16 b4

This is the best way to fight for the initiative. The alternative is 16 ♘g3, and here:

a) 16...♘d7 17 ♗e3 d5 18 exd5 exd5 (Black's centre looks very strong, but it could become vulnerable) 19 a4 (19 b4 ♔h8 20 ♕b3 c4 21 dxc4 bxc4 22 ♕a4 ♕c8 was unclear in Shirov-Onishchuk, FIDE Knockout, New Delhi 2000) 19...♖b8 20 axb5 axb5 21 b3 ♖a8 ½-½ Kasparov-Topalov, Linares 2005.

b) 16...♕e8 (making ...♘h5 possible) 17 a4 (17 ♗e3 ♘h5 18 ♘xh5 ♕xh5 19 ♘g5 ½-½ Svidler-Anand, Dortmund 2004) 17...♕d7 18 d4 exd4 19 cxd4 cxd4 (this is solid enough, but I would prefer the dynamic 19...c4) 20 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 21 ♕xd4 bxa4 22 ♖xa4 ♖fb8 was pretty level in Shirov-Kasimdzhanov, Sarajevo 2003.

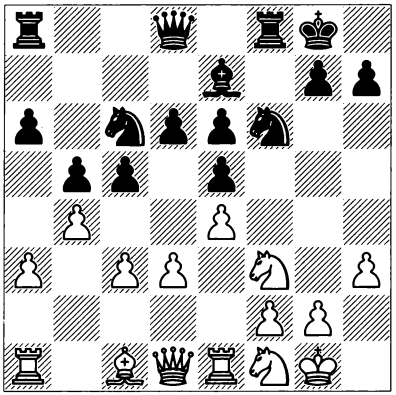
We now return to 16 b4 *(D)*.

This move creates tension in the centre. Both sides must consider multiple pawn advances and captures at each turn.

16...♕d7

This is a solid, healthy move which protects e6 and connects the rooks. A couple of alternatives:

B



a) 16...♘h5 17 ♘1h2 ♘f4 18 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 19 ♕b3 ♕d7 20 a4! gave White a slight initiative in Adams-Kasimdzhanov, Linares 2005.

b) 16...d5 17 ♘g3 (17 exd5 ♕xd5!? 18 ♕e2 ♖fd8 19 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 20 ♕xe5 ♘xe5 21 ♖xe5 ♖xd3 22 ♖xe6 ♔f7 23 ♖e3 ♖ad8 gave Black good play for the pawn in Kariakin-Grishchuk, Foros 2006) 17...♕c7 18 ♗g5 ♖ad8 19 ♕e2 d4 20 cxd4 cxb4? (20...♘xd4 =) 21 ♕a2! exd4 22 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 23 ♖ec1 +– Kariakin-Grishchuk, Odessa rapid 2008.

17 ♘g3

After 17 ♕b3, Black should play 17...♖fb8. This is a typical idea: Black's rook opposes White's queen in preparation for ...a5. White has:

a) 18 ♗d2 a5 19 ♘g5!? leads to a messy position. 19...axb4 20 axb4 cxb4 21 ♘xe6 d5 was unclear in Ponomariov-Aronian, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2005.

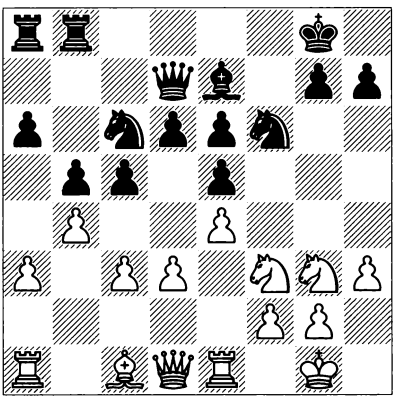
b) 18 ♘1h2 a5 19 ♗d2 h6 (Pavlović suggests 19...axb4!? 20 axb4 cxb4 21 cxb4 d5 22 ♘g4 ♘xg4 23 hxg4 dxe4 24 dxe4 ♘d4 25 ♘xd4 exd4 with approximate equality) 20 ♘g4 and now instead of 20...♘xg4?! 21 hxg4, as in Topalov-Kasimdzhanov, FIDE World Ch, San Luis 2005, Black should prefer 20...axb4 21 axb4 cxb4 22 cxb4 ♘h7 with a solid position.

c) 18 ♘g3 a5 19 bxc5 dxc5 (perhaps Black should throw in 19...a4!? here) 20 a4! (a typical reaction to ...a5 – White hopes to soften up the light squares) 20...b4 21 ♗e3 ♘e8 (21...c4 22 ♕xc4 bxc3 23 ♖ed1 ♗b4 24 ♖ac1 ♖c8 25 ♕a2 ♕d6 26 ♘e2 ± L.Dominguez-Bacrot, Biel 2008) 22 ♖ed1 ♘c7 23 ♕c4 ♘a6 24 d4 gave White some initiative in Shomoev-Smikovsky, Novokuznetsk 2008.

17...♖fb8 *(D)*

17...a5 18 bxc5 dxc5 19 ♕b3 (or 19 a4 b4, as in Svidler-Bacrot, Sofia 2006, when 20 ♕b3 is likely to transpose) 19...♖ab8 20 a4 b4 (with the a-file closed, Black's rooks are better placed here than they are on a8 and b8) 21 ♖d1 bxc3 22 ♕xc3 ♘d4 23 ♘xd4 exd4 24 ♕c2 ♗d6 was fine for Black in Bacrot-Aronian, Turin Olympiad 2006.

W



Black prepares for the opening of the queenside. If White sits still, 18...a5 will come next.

18 d4 exd4 19 cxd4 cxd4

Black could consider 19...c4 with a double-edged position.

20 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 21 ♕xd4 ♖c8 22 ♗b2 ♖c2 23 ♖ad1 ♕a7! 24 e5 dxe5 25 ♕xa7 ♖xa7 26 ♗xe5 ♖d7

Black has sufficient counterplay, Leko-Kramnik, Rapid match (game 4), Miskolc 2007.

B22)

14 ♗g5 *(D)*

White looks to exchange on f6 to help control the d5-square.

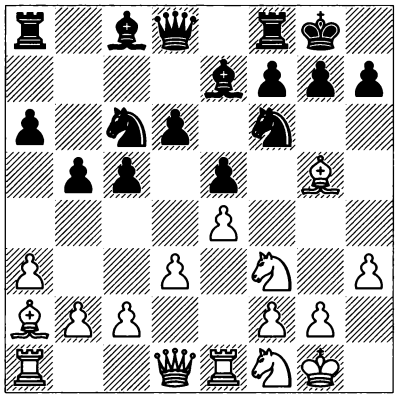
14...♘e8

Black would rather exchange bishops than allow White to capture on f6.

14...♘d7 bottles up his queenside pieces a bit, but Black can also ignore White's 'threat' and play 14...♗e6. White then has:

a) 15 ♘e3 is harmless. Black can displace the white rook and avoid the exchange of his f6-knight: 15...♗xa2 16 ♖xa2 ♘d7 17 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 18 c3 ♕c7 19 a4 ♘b6 20 axb5 ½-½ Ivanchuk-Grishchuk, Foros 2006.

B



b) 15 ♗xe6 is illogical. The bishop has no business being on g5 now. After 15...fxe6 16 c3 ♘d7 17 ♗d2 ♕e8 Black had a very healthy position in McShane-Aronian, Bundesliga 2006/7.

c) 15 ♗xf6 is the only consistent move. 15...♗xf6 16 ♘e3 ♗g5 17 ♘d5 ♗h6 18 b4 ♖c8 19 bxc5 dxc5 20 a4 ♕d6 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♘c3 b4 23 ♘d5 ♘e7 (23...♖a8 24 ♗b3 ♖a3, with counterplay, was suggested by Wei Ming) 24 ♗c4 ♘xd5 25 exd5 ♗xd5 26 ♘xe5 ♗xc4 27 ♘xc4 ± Gashimov-Bacrot, FIDE Grand Prix, Baku 2008. White's knight is better than Black's bishop.

15 ♗d2

15 ♗xe7 is not as harmless at it may look, but Black should be OK: 15...♘xe7 16 ♘e3 ♘f6 (16...♗e6 is also possible) 17 c3 ♕c7 18 ♘h2 ♗e6 19 ♘hg4 ♘d7 (19...♘xg4 20 hxg4 is not bad for Black in such a simplified position) 20 ♕f3 c4!? 21 ♘f5 was Anand-Kasimdzhanov, Leon 2005. Now Black should play a solid move like 21...♖fe8 or 21...♖ae8 with fair prospects.

15...♗e6

Worse is 15...♘c7?! 16 ♘e3 ♗e6 17 ♘d5 and White is slightly better, Gashimov-Ponomariov, Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008. Black cannot take on d5 with the knight and if he takes with the bishop he will give White the bishop-pair and the knight on c7 will lack prospects.

16 ♘e3

Black experienced no difficulties after 16 ♗xe6 fxe6 17 b4 a5 18 c3 axb4 19 axb4 ♖xa1 20 ♕xa1 ♘c7 21 ♘e3 ♕d7 22 ♕b2 ♖a8 23 ♖a1 in Anand-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2007 and the game was drawn here. Allowing Black to exchange bishops avoids strengthening his central control, but White will waste time with his rook on a2.

16...♗xa2 17 ♖xa2 ♘c7

From here the knight controls d5 and it may go to e6.

18 b3

Or 18 c4 ♖b8 19 cxb5 axb5 20 b4 ♕d7 = Vescovi-Almasi, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

18...g6 19 c4 ♖b8 20 ♗c3 ♕d7 21 ♘d5 ♘xd5 22 exd5 ♘d4

= Bruzon-Aronian, Turin Olympiad 2006.

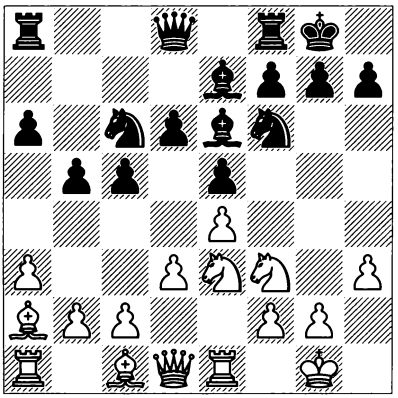
B23)

14 ♘e3

This is the most testing continuation.

14...♗e6 *(D)*

W



Here 15 ♘d5 is the obvious move, but Sutovsky's idea 15 ♗d5 is also interesting.

B231: 15 ♗d5 167
B232: 15 ♘d5 168

B231)

15 ♗d5

White hopes to disturb Black's piece coordination with this move.

15...♗d7!?

Black would like to capture on d5 with the knight, but of course to do so immediately would lose a piece. This move was Aronian's choice against Anand, but there are some decent alternatives:

a) 15...♗xd5 is rather obvious, and it is not so clearly bad either. 16 exd5 ♘b8 17 b4!

♘bd7 18 bxc5 ♘xc5 19 d4 exd4 20 ♘xd4 was Almasi-Navara, Wijk aan Zee 2006. White has some initiative, but the position is still rather unclear because White's pawn-structure is a bit disjointed.

b) With 15...♖c8, Black wants to develop his rook before retreating his knight to b8, but White can keep some initiative: 16 c3 ♗xd5 17 exd5 ♘b8 18 a4 ♕d7 19 axb5 axb5 20 c4 ± Sutovsky-Beliavsky, European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005.

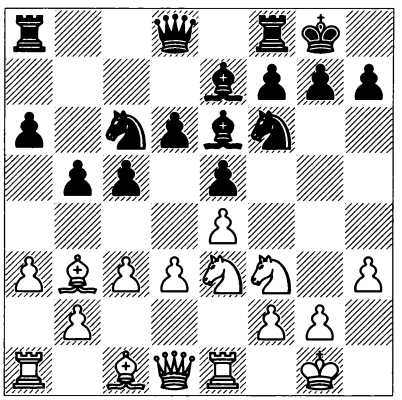
c) 15...♕d7 is a typical and solid response. 16 c3 ♗d8 17 b4 (17 a4 was met by 17...♗a5!? 18 axb5 axb5 19 ♕b3 ♗xd5 20 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 21 ♕xd5 ♘e7 22 ♕b3 h6 = in Sutovsky-Grishchuk, Turin Olympiad 2006, and 17...♗b6 also looks reasonable) 17...cxb4?! (this looks a little cooperative; again, 17...♗b6 is a reasonable option) 18 axb4 ♗b6 19 ♕b3 was a little better for White in Shirov-Grishchuk, Foros 2006.

16 ♗b3

16 ♗a2 ♗e6 repeats, but White could consider allowing Black to take on d5 and get on with it by 16 b4!?.

16...♗e6 17 c3 *(D)*

B



White does not mind allowing the exchange of bishops if he can recapture with his queen on b3 (instead of with his rook on a2).

17...♗xb3?!

Now White can develop an initiative. Instead 17...♕d7 intending ...♗d8 looks very solid.

18 ♕xb3 g6 19 ♕a2! a5

This allows White to further his campaign on the light squares. 19...♕d7 20 b4 a5 is a flexible alternative.

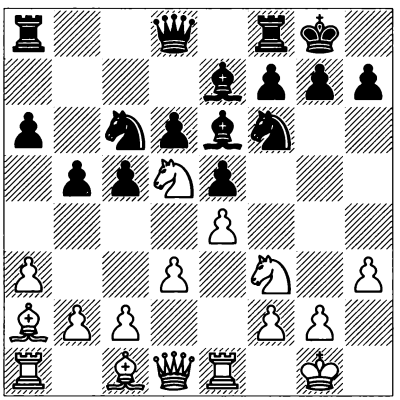
20 a4! b4 21 ♗d2 ♕c7 22 ♘h2! ♖fd8 23 ♘hg4 ♘xg4 24 ♘xg4!

This is better than 24 hxg4 ♕d7, tying White to the defence of the g4-pawn. After 24 ♘xg4 White has excellent piece-play and his queen is very strong on a2. White had a nice advantage in Anand-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

B232)

15 ♘d5 *(D)*

B



It may seem strange to make the journey ♘d2-f1-e3-d5 instead of the more direct ♘c3-d5, but Black has spent time playing ...♗b7-c8-e6, and now he cannot capture on d5 with the f6-knight without losing a piece. So Black must either capture with the e6-bishop, when White will enjoy the bishop-pair, or play around the d5-knight for the time being.

15...♗xd5

This is by far the most common move, but Black should consider the alternatives:

a) The 'Breyer' idea 15...♘b8 avoids the fork on d5 and thus prepares to capture with the f6-knight, but it still looks rather slow. Grishchuk thought it was worth a try anyway, in a rapid game at least. 16 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 17 ♗b1 ♘c6 18 ♘g5 (Khalifman suggests 18 c3 intending d4) 18...♗d7 19 f4 exf4 20 ♗xf4 ♖ae8 gave Black a solid position in Anand-Grishchuk, Cap d'Agde rapid 2003.

b) 15...♘d4 looks very logical. 16 ♘xe7+ (16 ♘d2 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♗d7 gives us the same pawn-structure as in the main line but Black has not given up the bishop-pair) 16...♕xe7 17 c3 ♘xf3+ 18 ♕xf3 ♘d7 was fine for Black

in Zhigalko-Beliavsky, European Ch, Plovdiv 2008.

16 exd5 ♘d4

16...♘b8 17 b4 cxb4 18 axb4 ♘bd7 has also been tried, but after 19 ♗d2 (stopping ...a5) White was better in Al Modiahki-Kaplan, Biel 2007.

17 ♘d2

White keeps pieces on the board and intends to drive the d4-knight away with c3. This is the most common, but it is not the only move.

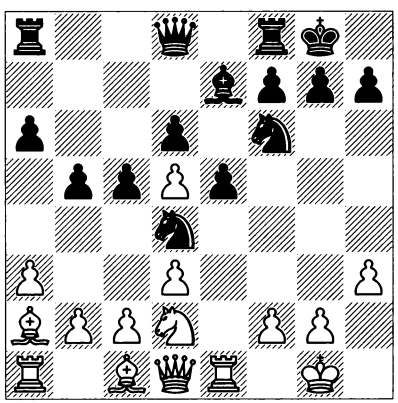
a) 17 b4 ♘xf3+ 18 ♕xf3 ♘d7 is fine for Black according to Khalifman. Black is happy to exchange another set of pieces and may try to trade another with ...♗g5.

b) 17 ♘xd4 cxd4 18 c3 dxc3 19 bxc3 ♘d7 20 a4 ♕c7 21 ♗b2 ♘c5 22 ♗b3 ♖fc8 23 ♗c2 ♘d7 was fine for Black in Ehlvest-Vescovi, Cali 2007. White's bishops are not very threatening.

c) 17 ♘h2 looks a bit odd here, but it has similar ideas to the main line. 17...♘f5 18 c3 ♘d7 (18...g6!? Pavlović) 19 d4 ♗g5 (19...cxd4!? 20 ♗b1 ♘h4 21 cxd4 ♖c8 is another idea) 20 dxe5 ♗xc1 21 ♖xc1 ♘xe5 22 ♗b1 ♕g5 23 ♖e4 gave White some initiative in Kasimdzhanov-Akopian, Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006.

We now return to the position after 17 ♘d2 *(D)*:

B



17...♘f5 18 ♘e4

18 b4 ♕c7 19 ♗b2 is given by Khalifman, but this does not look too dangerous.

18...♘d7

Here too Pavlović suggests 18...g6 with the idea ...♘xe4, ...♘g7, ...♗g5 and ...f5.

19 g3!?

This was suggested by Khalifman as well. 19 b4 is more common. Black then has:

a) 19...♖c8 20 ♗d2 g6!? 21 c3 ♘g7 22 c4 ♘f5!? (now that the d4-square is open again) 23 a4 cxb4 24 cxb5 a5 was unclear in Anand-Svidler, Amber Rapid, Monaco 2006.

b) 19...cxb4!? (Black immediately fights for the initiative) 20 axb4 a5 21 bxa5 ♕xa5 22 ♗d2 ♕c7 23 c3 ♘h4! 24 g3 ♘g6 25 h4 f5 26 ♘g5 ♗xg5 27 hxg5 ♘c5 was excellent for Black in Gopal-Kasimdzhanov, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

19...g6

Khalifman suggests the immediate 19...♖c8.

20 h4 ♖c8

20...a5!?.

21 b4 ♕b6 *(D)*

21...♘g7 may be better.

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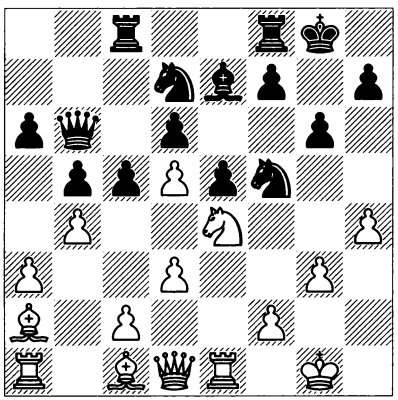


22 h5

Leko-Kramnik, Rapid match (game 2), Miskolc 2007. Black should probably maintain the tension by 22...♕c7 23 c3 a5, with counterplay.

Conclusions

This modern line has been White's main choice to avoid the Marshall for a while now, but Black is doing just fine. It is hard to believe that Black's set-up can be challenged by moves such as 8 h3, 9 d3 and 10 a3. Black has more than one logical way to develop, and the classical 10...♘a5 11 ♗a2 c5 remains sufficient. Black has also recently added the Marshall thrust 9...d5 to his arsenal, showing that White's quiet play does not promise him a quiet life.

10 Other Anti-Marshall Lines

In this chapter we look at some loose ends where White avoids the main lines.

In Section 10.1 we examine the slow 8 d3, which can also arise if White plays d3 even earlier. This is a line that needs to be prepared by any Ruy Lopez player, along with lines like the Exchange Variation, Worrall Attack, and others. It was well covered in *The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black* but we shall take a look at it here too, especially as it is a common reply to the 7...0-0 move-order at amateur level when White decides to avoid the Marshall and lacks a well-worked-out repertoire.

The second part of this chapter features the very slow 8 a3, which, although not as harmless as it seems at first sight, should not be too difficult to handle.

Section 10.3 explores the sharp Anti-Marshall 8 d4, which is quite popular, especially as a surprise weapon. Black's most solid response is 8...d6. This is covered in *The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black*, so here we shall only look at 'pure' Anti-Marshall systems for Black, which can become quite tactical.

The fourth section of the chapter investigates a line that is also usually employed as a surprise weapon, but if Black knows the positional ideas White's system is not very dangerous.

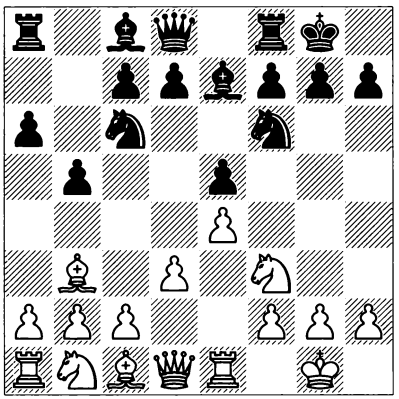
In the last part of this chapter we survey lines where White enters the Marshall but then decides against capturing the pawn on move 10.

Thus we have:

Section 10.1: 8 d3 170
Section 10.2: 8 a3 172
Section 10.3: 8 d4 173
Section 10.4: 8 c3 d5 9 d4 183
Section 10.5: 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 others 187

Section 10.1

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 d3 *(D)*


B

This move is often played by those who want to avoid theoretical lines. White will play slowly with d3 and c3. The delay in playing d4, however, does put less pressure on Black.

8...d6

Black can also opt for 8...♗b7, but after 9 ♘bd2 (9 a4 d6 is Chapter 8) 9...d6 10 a3!? ♘a5 11 ♗a2 c5 12 ♘f1 the play resembles that of Chapter 9. However, here White has not spent a tempo on the move h3 and that should favour White somewhat.

9 c3

This is sometimes referred to as the 'Pilnik Variation' and this is well covered in *The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black*. 9 a4 leads to Chapter 8 after either 9...b4 or 9...♗b7. Instead, 9 a3 ♘a5 10 ♗a2 c5 is once again similar to Chapter 9. Here too, White has not played h3, but this time Black has not committed to ...♗b7 yet either, so Black may actually end up with a better version of those lines because he will not spend time playing ...♗b7-c8.

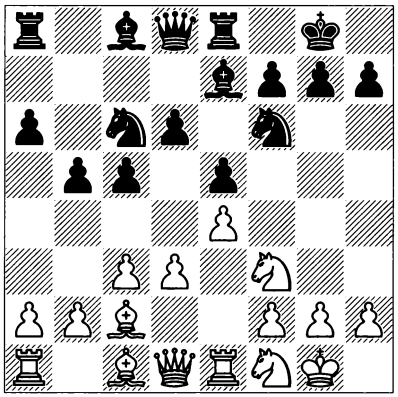
9...♘a5 10 ♗c2 c5 11 ♘bd2 ♘c6

11...♖e8 is given in *The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black*. The text-move may lead to similar play.

12 ♘f1 ♖e8 *(D)*

There are other moves here, but we shall do what Aronian does! Black's set-up is very similar to that in Chapter 9, but here he has not spent

W



time playing ...♗b7-c8, while White has not played h3 or a3.

13 h3

So White spends a tempo on this move after all. Instead 13 a3 h6 14 b4 ♗e6 15 ♘g3 d5! 16 exd5 ♕xd5 already saw Black taking the initiative in Shirov-Aronian, Candidates match (game 6), Elista 2007. The probing 13 ♗g5 is well met by 13...♗e6 14 ♘e3 ♘g4, exchanging pieces. After 13 a4 ♗e6 14 ♘e3, which was seen in J.Polgar-Aronian, Hoogeveen 2003, Polgar recommends 14...d5!.

13...h6 14 ♘g3

14 a4 can be met by either 14...♖b8 or 14...♗e6, while the immediate 14 d4 is well met by the liquidation 14...cxd4 15 cxd4 exd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 17 ♕xd4. This is a common motif in many lines of the Closed Ruy Lopez. The evaluation of the position revolves around piece activity. Here Black seems to be doing quite well, which is not surprising considering White took two moves to play the d4 advance. A couple of examples:

a) 17...♗b7 18 ♘g3 d5 19 e5 ♘e4 20 ♘xe4 dxe4 = Kasparov-Svidler, Linares 1999.

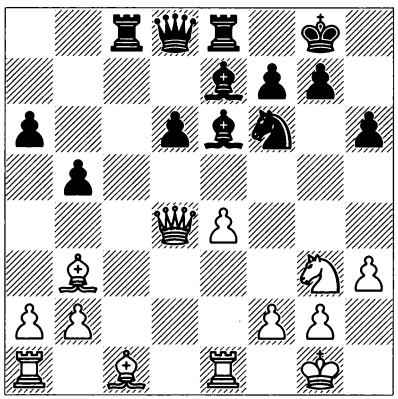
b) 17...♗e6 18 ♗f4 ♖c8 19 ♗b3 ♗xb3 20 axb3 d5 21 e5 ♘e4 22 ♘e3 ♗c5 (Black already has the initiative and Ivanchuk gradually outplays his less experienced opponent) 23 ♕d3 ♕h4 24 g3 ♕xh3 25 ♕xd5 ♗xe3 26 ♕xe4 ♗xf4 27 ♕xf4 ♕e6 ∓ Lahno-Ivanchuk, Benidorm 2008.

14...♗e6 15 d4

White took an extra move to secure his centre before making this advance. With the bishop somewhat exposed on e6, Black is forced to give up the centre, but this is good enough.

15...exd4 16 cxd4 cxd4 17 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 18 ♕xd4 ♖c8 19 ♗b3 *(D)*

B



19...♗xb3

If Black wants a more complicated game, he can play 19...d5 20 e5 ♘d7 as in Svidler-Aronian, Amber Blindfold, Monte Carlo 2007.

20 axb3 d5 21 e5 ♗c5 22 ♕f4 ♘e4!

Black must stay active. A pawn will drop but Black has enough activity to hold the balance.

23 ♘xe4 dxe4 24 ♖xa6 ♕d3! *(D)*

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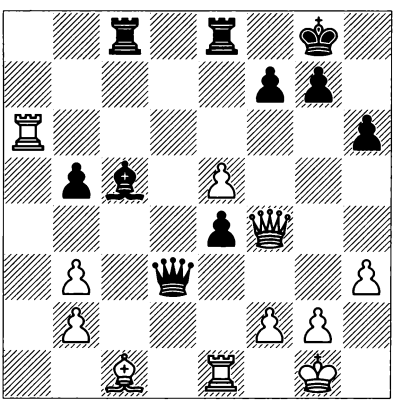


25 ♕xe4 ♗xf2+!

This temporary sacrifice leads to a drawn ending.

26 ♔xf2 ♖c2+ 27 ♔g1 ♕xe4 28 ♖xe4 ♖xc1+ 29 ♔h2 ♖d1

This is probably more precise than 29...♖c2, as in Fressinet-Naiditsch, Bundesliga 2007/8, although Black drew quickly in that game as well.

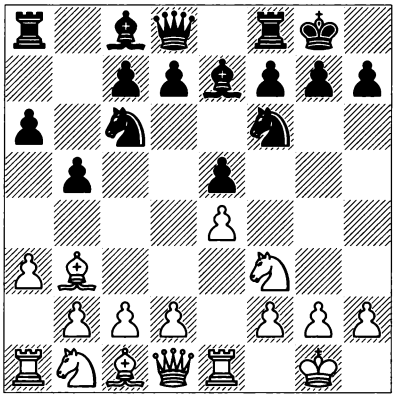
30 ♖a7 ♔f8 31 ♖f4 ♖e7 32 ♖a8+ ♖e8 33 ♖a7 ♖e7 34 ♖a8+

½-½ Leko-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2008.

Section 10.2

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a3 *(D)*

B



This is an odd little move. White does not forsake advancing with d4 in one go, but he retains the option of playing d3 too.

8...d6

After 8...♗b7 9 d3 d6, 10 h3 transposes to Chapter 9, but White can try to save time on this move and play 10 ♘c3 or 10 ♘bd2 instead.

Black sometimes plays 8...♗c5, reaching a kind of Arkhangelsk Variation where White has played the rather slow advance a3 (usually in that line White plays a quick a4 and c3 and avoids ♖e1), but this leads to positions very different from the ones covered in this book. The text-move is simple and sound, and also gives Black a relatively rare option that is not difficult to learn against the rare move 8 a3.

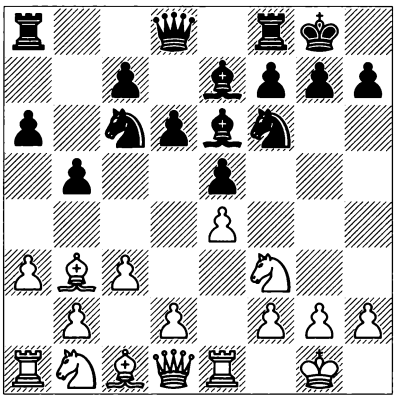
9 c3

After 9 h3, Black can choose 9...♗b7 10 d3, when we are in Chapter 9, while if he prefers the lines of that chapter without ...♗b7, 9...♘a5 10 ♗a2 c5 could be played. This position sometimes comes about from the move-order 7...d6 8 c3 0-0 9 a3, which is attributed to Suetin.

9...♗e6!? *(D)*

It would seem more consistent to continue 9...♘a5 but after both 10 ♗c2 c5 and 10 ♗a2 c5 White can play 11 d4. This is hardly fatal, because after 11...♕c7 Black has a Chigorin setup where White has played the slow move a3. However, in general I have tried to avoid these Closed positions where White gets to play d4 in one go, so I present the text-move as an alternative.

W

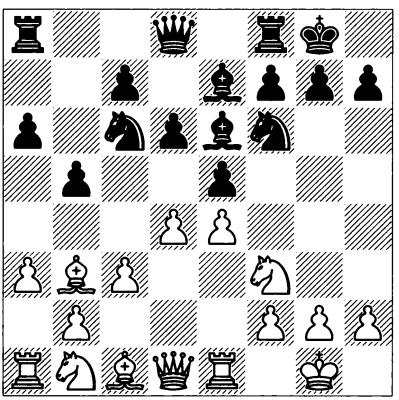


By playing this move, Black essentially essays the rare Kholmov Variation which comes about after 7...d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♗e6. Here White has played a3 instead of h3, which somewhat favours Black. In the Kholmov line White's main try for an advantage is 10 d4 ♗xb3 11 axb3, which clearly will not be possible here. Although the move a3 does cover b4 (the move h3 covers g4, which White is missing in this position), it also weakens the b3-square, and this can favour Black in some lines.

10 d4 *(D)*

This move is White's only try for an advantage. 10 ♗c2 d5 11 exd5 ♕xd5 is fine for Black, while 10 ♗xe6 fxe6 11 d4 ♕e8! 12 dxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘xe5 dxe5 already gave Black the initiative in Short-Ivanchuk, Dubai (rapid) 2002. The doubled pawns cover important squares and Black is ready to play ...♖d8 and perhaps even ...♘h5.

B



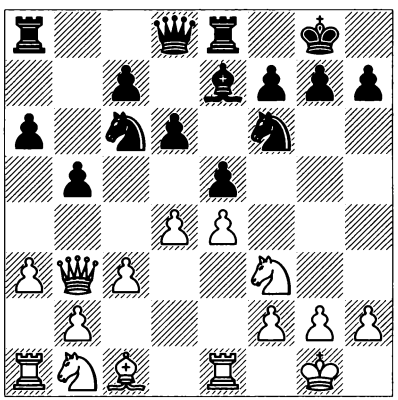
10...♗xb3 11 ♕xb3 ♖e8 *(D)*

This solid move has been played by both Aronian and Ivanchuk, so we shall take it as the main line. Other moves are also possible:

a) 11...d5!? 12 exd5 ♘a5 13 ♕c2 exd4 14 cxd4 ♘xd5 15 ♘c3 ♖e8 was Suetin-Lukacs, Leipzig 1986. Black has good squares for his pieces, but White still has a slight initiative.

b) 11...♘d7!? 12 ♕c2 (Greenfeld points out the trick 12 ♕d5 ♘a5 13 dxe5 c6 14 ♕d4? ♘b3, exploiting the weakened b3-square) 12...♘a5 13 ♘bd2 exd4 14 cxd4 c5 15 b4 (this leads to a structure where both sides have a dangerous pawn-mass) 15...♘c6 16 bxc5 dxc5 17 d5 ♘ce5 18 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 19 ♗b2 ♗f6 20 f4 ♘d3 21 e5 c4 22 ♖f1 ♕b6+ 23 ♔h1 was Grishchuk-Avrukh, European Clubs Cup, Saint Vincent 2005. Here Black should probably play 23...♗d8! with a complicated game.

This system can be studied in tandem with the proper Kholmov Variation in which White plays 10 d4 ♗xb3 11 ♕xb3 (instead of 11 axb3!).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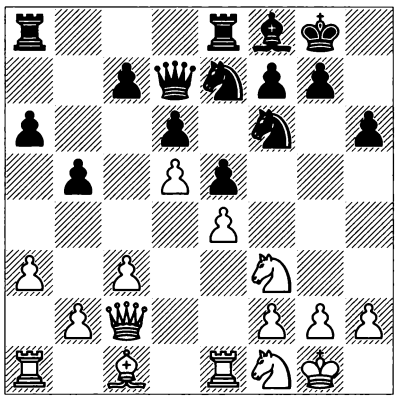
12 ♕c2 ♕d7

After 12...♗f8 13 ♗g5! h6 14 ♗h4 (it is probably better to play 14 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 15 d5 ♘e7 16 ♘bd2, when the attempt to fight in the centre with 16...c6 17 dxc6 ♘xc6 leaves the d5-square weak) 14...g5!? 15 ♗g3 g4 16 ♘h4 exd4 17 ♘d2 dxc3 18 ♕xc3 ♘e5 19 ♘f5 gave White some compensation for the pawn, but no more than that, in Ponomariov-Aronian, FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2005.

13 ♘bd2 ♗f8 14 d5 ♘e7 15 ♘f1 h6! *(D)*

Black wants to keep both of his knights to help fight for the light squares in the centre, so he takes a moment to prevent ♗g5.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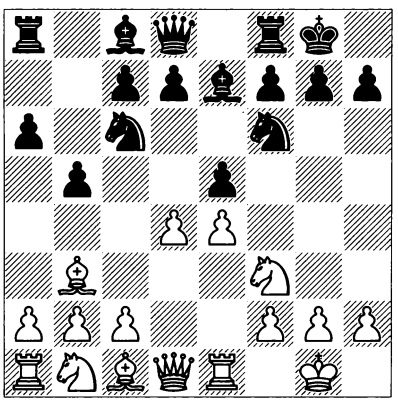
16 b3 c6 17 c4 ♖ac8 18 ♕d1 cxd5 19 cxd5 ♘h7 20 a4 f5

Black had good counterplay in Topalov-Ivanchuk, Frankfurt rapid 2000.

Section 10.3

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 d4 *(D)*


B

White looks to open the centre immediately. This can lead to sharp play and sometimes it is White, and not Black, who ends up sacrificing a pawn. This is a reasonable option for White if he wants to avoid the main lines, especially if he is well versed in the Yates Variation, 7...d6 8 c3 0-0 9 d4.

8...♘xd4

This move gives the game an independent flavour. Instead 8...exd4?! runs into the annoying 9 e5 ♘e8 10 ♗d5!. However, 8...d6 is a sound choice. Then White's best is probably 9

c3 transposing to the Yates Variation, which normally comes about after 7...d6 8 c3 0-0 9 d4. This is well covered in *The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black.*

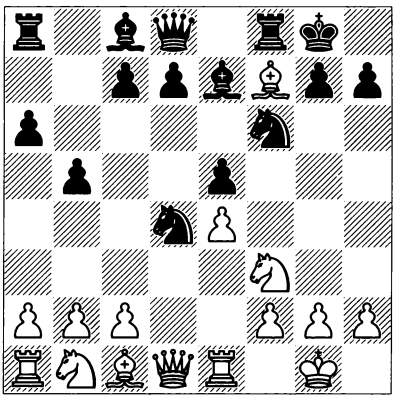
After the text-move (8...♘xd4), 9 ♘xe5 would allow Black to grab the bishop-pair with 9...♘xb3, when only Black can be better, so White must choose between the tricky 9 ♗xf7+ and the normal 9 ♘xd4.

A: 9 ♗xf7+ 174
B: 9 ♘xd4 178

A)

9 ♗xf7+ *(D)*

B



This sharp move is rather surprising. For a long time it was thought to favour Black, but after Ivanchuk used it to defeat Leko, it became clear that Black should not ignore this tactical possibility.

9...♖xf7 10 ♘xe5 ♖f8

Black does best to return the piece immediately. Attempts to win material run into trouble because of the possibility of White playing the e5 advance in combination with ♕f3+ or ♕d5+. Some examples:

a) 10...♗c5? fails to 11 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 12 ♗e3 ♘e6 13 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 14 e5 and White wins material.

b) 10...c5? 11 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 12 e5 ♘e8 13 c3 ♘c6 14 ♕d5+ ♔f8 15 ♖e3! (the rook-lift is deadly) 15...g6 16 ♖f3+ ♔g7 17 ♕f7+ ♔h8 18 ♗h6 leads to mate.

c) 10...♘c6?! 11 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 12 e5 ♘e8 13 ♕d5+ ♔f8 14 ♖e3 ±. White again has a strong attack.

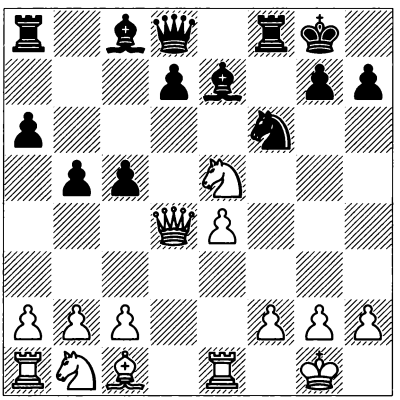
d) 10...♘e6?! 11 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 12 e5 ♗b7 (12...♘e8 13 ♕f3+) 13 exf6 ♗xf6 14 ♘c3 ±. Black does not have enough for the exchange.

11 ♕xd4 c5 *(D)*

Black is a pawn down, so he must play aggressively. This is the best way to fight for the initiative. Instead 11...♗b7 12 ♘c3 c5 generally leads to the same position after 13 ♕d1, but we shall take 11...c5 as the main line because it is more popular and it will also allow us to look at other retreats by the white queen.

One independent possibility is 11...♗b7 12 c4. After 12...c5 13 ♕d3 ♕c7 14 ♘f3 bxc4 15 ♕xc4+ d5 16 exd5 ♗xd5 17 ♕e2 ♗d6 18 ♘c3 ♗xf3 19 ♕xf3 ♗xh2+ 20 ♔f1 ♖ad8 21 g3 ♘h5! the complications led to a draw in Kamsky-Leko, FIDE Grand Prix, Jermuk 2009: 22 ♕xh5 ♖xf2+ 23 ♔xf2 ♕xg3+ 24 ♔e2 ♕g2+ 25 ♔e3 ♕g3+ 26 ♔e2 ♕g2+ 27 ♔e3 ♕g3+ 28 ♔e2 ♕g2+ ½-½.

W



12 ♕d1

This is the safest move. Other retreats leave the queen more vulnerable to further attack and allow Black to develop his initiative without any great difficulty:

a) 12 ♕e3?! ♕c7 13 ♘f3 ♗b7 14 ♘bd2 (14 e5 ♘g4 ∓) 14...c4 15 e5 ♘d5 16 ♕d4 ♗c5 17 ♕g4 ♘b4 ∓ was given by Panczyk and Ilczuk in *New in Chess Yearbook 87.*

b) 12 ♕d2?! ♕c7 13 ♘f3 ♗b7 14 ♘c3 ♖ae8 15 e5 b4 16 exf6 bxc3 17 bxc3 ♗xf6 gave Black more than enough for the pawn in Vogt-Goldberg, East German Ch, Nordhausen 1986.

c) 12 ♕d3?! c4 (or 12...♗b7, when 13 ♕b3+ transposes to line 'd21' below, while 12...♕c7 13 ♘f3 ♗b7 allows White to develop more

easily with 14 ♗g5) 13 ♕e2 ♗b7 14 ♘c3 ♕c7 15 ♘g4 b4 16 ♘d5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♖ae8 18 ♗e3 ♗xd5 ∓ Belotti-Minasian, European Ch, Ohrid 2001.

d) 12 ♕c3?! and then:

d1) 12...♕c7 13 a4 ♗b7 14 axb5 ♘xe4 15 ♕b3+ c4!? 16 ♕xc4+ ♕xc4 17 ♘xc4 axb5 18 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 19 ♘cd2 ♖a1 gave Black sufficient counterplay in Kamsky-Anand, Amber Blindfold, Nice 2009.

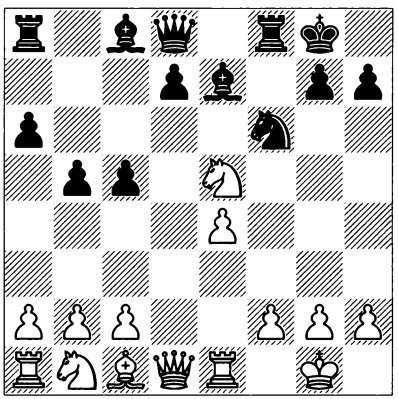
d2) 12...♗b7 and now:

d21) If 13 ♕b3+ then Black should not play 13...c4? 14 ♘xc4 but instead 13...d5! with compensation.

d22) 13 f3 c4 14 h3 (14 ♗e3?! d6 15 ♘g4 ♘xg4 16 fxg4 ♕d7 ∓) 14...d5 (14...♕c7 also looks good) 15 exd5 ♘xd5 gave Black a strong initiative in Nowak-Kwiatkowski, corr. 1998.

We now return to 12 ♕d1 *(D)*:

B



Black now has a choice:

A1: 12...♕c7	175
A2: 12...♗b7	176

A1)

12...♕c7

Black attacks the e5-knight immediately. This was Leko's choice when Ivanchuk wheeled out the surprising 9 ♗xf7+.

13 ♘g4

Other moves offer White little:

a) 13 ♗f4? just loses material to 13...♗d6.

b) 13 ♘d3?! ♗b7 14 f3 c4 15 ♘f4 (15 ♘f2 ♗d6 16 h3 ♗h2+ 17 ♔f1 d5 is much better for Black, Szyszka-Mroczek, corr. 1996) 15...♗d6!? (or 15...♗c5+ 16 ♔h1 ♖ae8 with compensation) 16 g3 g5 17 ♘g2 g4 gives Black a strong initiative.

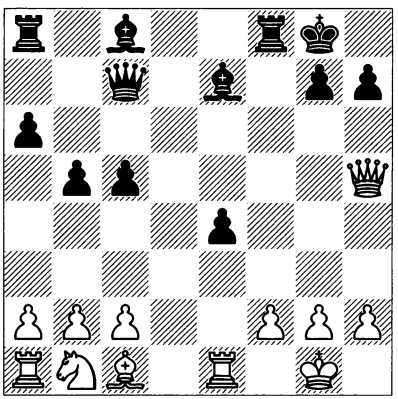
c) 13 ♘f3 ♗b7 14 ♗g5 (14 ♘c3 b4 transposes to Line A2) 14...d5!? (a sharper idea than 14...♖ae8 15 ♘c3 or 14...b4 15 ♘bd2) 15 exd5 (15 e5 ♘e4 16 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 17 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 18 ♕xd2 d4 with compensation) 15...♘xd5 16 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 17 ♘g5 (17 ♘bd2 ♘d5 intending ...♘f4 looks OK for Black) 17...♕f4 (after 17...♖f6 18 ♘d2 ♖af8, as in Ulybin-Timoshenko, Cheliabinsk 1989, White could try 19 ♘ge4!?) 18 ♕d2 ♘g6 19 ♕xf4 ♘xf4 20 ♘e4 was Timofeev-Nybäck, European Ch, Plovdiv 2008. Here the simplest is 20...♗xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♖ad8 with compensation; for example, 22 ♘c3 ♖d2 or 22 ♖e1 ♘e2+ 23 ♔f1 ♘d4.

13...♘xg4 14 ♕xg4

Now the play becomes rather forced.

14...d5 15 ♕h5 dxe4 *(D)*

W



16 ♕d5+

16 ♘c3 gives White nothing after 16...♖f5 17 ♕e8+ ♖f8 18 ♕h5 ♖f5 19 ♕e8+ ½-½ Smejkal-I.Zaitsev, Polanica Zdroj 1970. Black could also try 16...♗f5 17 ♘xe4 ♕e5 with good play for the pawn.

16...♔h8 17 ♕xa8

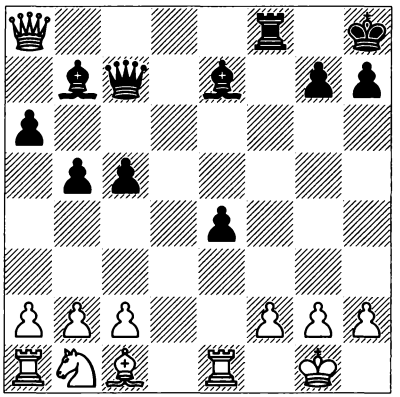
White can take the pawn instead with 17 ♕xe4, but 17...♖a7 followed by either ...♗f5 or even ...♗d6, ...♗b7 and ...♖aa8, gives Black good compensation.

17...♗b7 *(D)*

18 ♕a7!

White will lose the queen, but he wants to inconvenience Black as much as possible. 18 ♕xf8+ ♗xf8 19 ♘d2 ♗d6 20 ♘f1 ♗e5 21 c3 h6 22 ♗e3 ♗d5 23 h3 ♗c4 24 ♘d2 ♗d3 gave

W



Black sufficient play in Vorobiov-Novik, Sochi 2007.

18...♖a8 19 ♗f4!

Another nuisance move. 19 ♕xa8+ ♗xa8 20 ♗e3 ♕e5 21 c3 ♗d6 22 g3 is similar, but White is a tempo behind the actual game.

19...♕c6 20 ♕xa8+ ♗xa8 21 ♗e3 ♕f6 22 c3 ♗d6 23 ♘d2 ♕e5

Black could consider 23...♗c6 to stop a4.

24 g3 h6 25 a4! ♗c6

The unclear 25...♕e8 26 axb5 ♕xb5 was suggested by Panczyk and Ilczuk, but the text-move is not bad either.

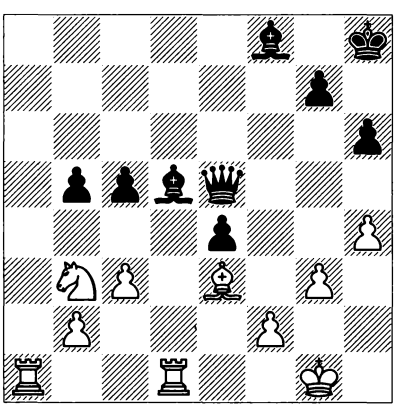
26 axb5 axb5 27 ♘b3 ♗f8

27...♔h7 is unclear – Leon Hoyos.

28 ♖ed1 ♗d5 29 h4 *(D)*

29 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 30 ♗xc5 is more obvious, but 30...e3 31 ♗xe3 ♕e4 32 ♖xd5 ♕xd5 33 ♗d4 ♔g8 34 ♖a7 g5 (Leon Hoyos) is not so clear.

B



29...♔g8?

Better is 29...♗xb3! 30 ♖d8 ♔g8 31 ♖aa8 ♕f5! (not 31...♕e7? 32 ♖e8 ♕d6 33 ♖ad8 +–) 32 ♖xf8+ (32 ♖ac8 ♗e6 is equal) 32...♕xf8 33 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 34 ♗xc5+ ♔f7 and the opposite-coloured bishop ending is drawn.

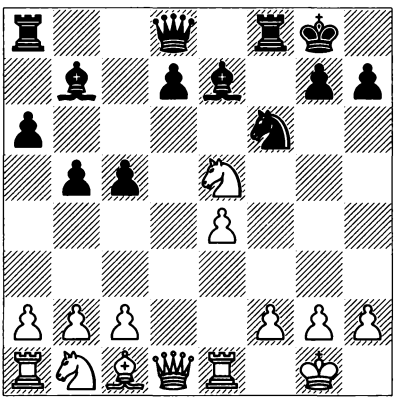
30 ♘c1!

± Ivanchuk-Leko, Morelia/Linares 2008. White retains his knight and Black has trouble creating counterplay.

A2)

12...♗b7 *(D)*

W



Black attacks the e4-pawn and delays committing his queen, if only for a moment.

13 ♘c3 ♕c7

13...b4 14 ♘d5 ♘xd5 15 exd5 is not so convincing for Black, but 13...♕e8!? is rather interesting. White has:

a) 14 f4 d6 15 ♘f3 ♕c6!? puts pressure on White's e4-pawn, and 16 ♘d5 can be met by 16...♖ae8 or even 16...♗d8!?.

b) 14 ♘g4 has been the most popular move. 14...♕g6 (also interesting is 14...b4 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 exd5 ♕f7 17 f3 ♖fe8 18 ♘e5 ♕xd5 19 ♕xd5+ ♗xd5 20 ♘xd7 ♖ad8 with compensation) 15 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16 ♘d5 (16 f3 ♗xc3 17 bxc3 ♖ad8 intending ...d5 gives Black counterplay) 16...♖ae8 17 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 18 f3 d5 19 e5 (19 exd5 ♖xe1+ 20 ♕xe1 ♗xd5 with compensation due to the weakness of c2 and f3) 19...♖f5 20 f4 d4 gave Black the initiative in Szczepanski-Malinin, corr. 1992.

c) 14 ♘d5 looks critical. After 14...♗d6 (or 14...d6 15 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16 ♘g4) 15 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 16 ♘g4 ♖e6 17 f3 ± Black may have some compensation, but it is not clear that it is enough for a pawn.

14 ♘g4

Other moves give Black good chances:

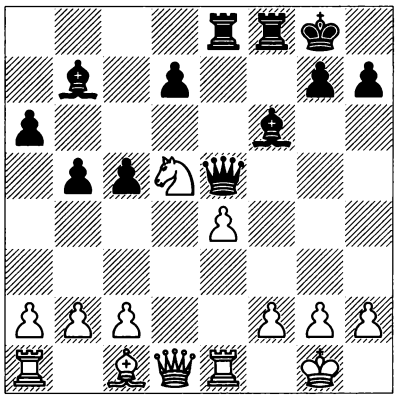
a) 14 ♘f3?! b4 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 exd5 ♗f6 17 d6 ♕c6 18 c3 a5 19 cxb4 axb4 ∓ de la Garza-Kaidanov, Las Vegas 1992.

b) 14 ♘d3 b4 15 ♗f4 (after 15 ♘d5 Black wins back the pawn with 15...♘xd5 16 exd5 ♗d6 17 g3 ♗xd5) 15...d6 16 ♘a4 (not 16 ♘d5? ♘xd5 17 exd5 c4 −+) 16...♘xe4 17 f3 (with the point that 17...♘f6 will be met by 18 ♘axc5) 17...♗c6! looks at least OK for Black.

14...♘xg4

14...♖ae8 is a serious alternative for Black. After 15 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16 ♘d5 ♕e5 *(D)* White has tried:

W



a) 17 c4?! bxc4 18 ♘b6? (18 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 19 f3 d5 20 exd5 ♕d4+ 21 ♔h1 ♖xe1+ 22 ♕xe1 ♗xd5 ∓) 18...♗h4 19 g3 ♕f6 20 f3 ♕xb6 21 gxh4 ♕g6+ 22 ♔h1 ♖xf3! 23 ♕xf3 ♖xe4 −+ Carton-Crawley, London 1986.

b) 17 ♗f4?! ♕xb2 18 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 19 ♗g3 ♖xe4 (19...♗xe4 also looks good) 20 ♕xd7 ♗c6 ∓ Kopp-Stock, corr. 1994.

c) 17 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 18 f3 d5 19 exd5 ♖xe1+ (maybe Black should try 19...♕d4+!? 20 ♕xd4 ♖xe1+ 21 ♔f2 ♖xc1! 22 ♕e5 ♖xa1 23 ♕e6+ ♖f7 24 d6 ♖d1 25 d7 h6 26 ♕e8+ ♖f8 27 ♔e2, with unclear play) 20 ♕xe1 ♗xd5 21 c3 ♕g6 22 ♕g3 ♕xg3 23 hxg3 ♖e8 24 ♔f2 ± Navarro Segura-Chudnovsky, Las Vegas 1994. The ending is unpleasant but Black should draw.

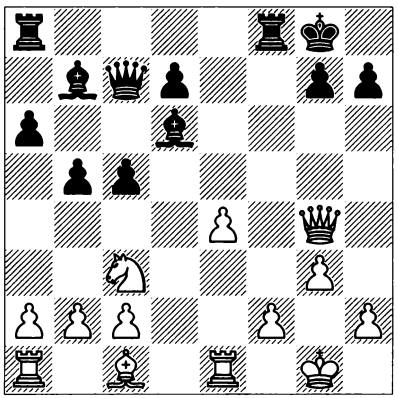
15 ♕xg4 ♗d6 16 g3 *(D)*

This weakens the light squares but the alternatives are not convincing:

a) 16 ♕h3 ♖ae8 (or 16...b4 17 ♘d5 ♗xd5 18 exd5 ♗e5 with compensation) 17 ♗g5 ♗e5 18 ♖ad1 d6 19 ♗h4 ♕f7! was Rantanen-Pinter, Helsinki 1983. With pressure on f2 and a2, Black has excellent chances.

b) 16 ♕h5 ♖ae8 (16...♗e5!?) 17 ♗d2 ♗e5 gives Black compensation, and after 18 f3?! b4 19 ♘d1 d5 20 exd5 ♗xd5 Black was taking over the whole board in Morozov-Weissleder, corr. 1995.

B



16...♖ae8

After 16...♗e5 17 ♘d5 ♗xd5 18 exd5 ♕d6 White gave back the pawn with 19 c3 ♕xd5 20 ♗e3 in Stripunsky-Svirin, Smolensk 1991. This looks a little better for White because he will get pressure on the d-file.

17 ♗g5

This looks a bit odd, because the bishop cannot retreat to h4 and g3. White should probably look for improvements in other lines, but Black seems able to hold the balance:

a) 17 ♕d1 ♗e5 18 ♘d5 ♕d6 19 c3 ♕g6, with the initiative, is given by Panczyk and Ilczuk.

b) 17 ♗h6 ♗e5 18 ♖ad1 d6 19 ♗f4 was Van Riemsdijk-Avila Jimenez, Barbera 1999. Now Black should choose the thematic 19...♕f7!, with good play.

c) 17 ♖d1 ♖e6 18 ♘d5 (maybe White should just develop with 18 ♗e3!?) 18...♕d8! 19 ♗d2 ♕e8 20 ♗c3 was played in Zecha-Polster, corr. 1989. Now 20...♕f7 is again possible, but even better is 20...♗e5! 21 ♗xe5 (21 f3 runs into 21...h5!, and 21 ♘c7 backfires after 21...♕f7!) 21...♖xe5, winning back the pawn because 22 f3? is again met by 22...h5! winning the f3-pawn.

17...♗e5! 18 ♖ad1 d6 19 ♘d5 ♕f7 20 ♗f4 ♗xb2 21 ♖e2

Sivanandan-Negi, Indian Ch, Chennai 2008. Here 21...♖e6 is given by Panczyk and Ilczuk, while 21...h5 and 21...♗d4! also look good for Black.

B)

9 ♘xd4

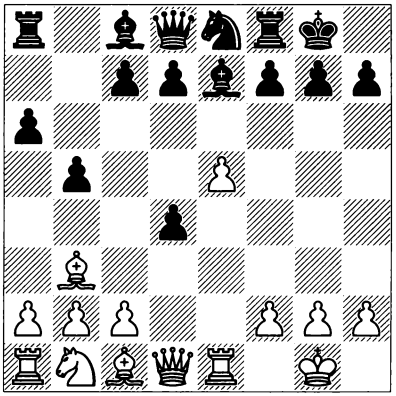
This move is less risky for White.

9...exd4 10 e5

Not, of course, 10 ♕xd4? c5 and 11...c4, trapping the white bishop.

10...♘e8 *(D)*

W



Now White can sacrifice a pawn to accelerate his development or simply recapture on d4.

B1: 11 ♕xd4 178
B2: 11 c3 180

B1)

11 ♕xd4

White refrains from sacrificing a pawn and brings his queen into play. Black can gain some time chasing the queen, but he needs to be careful because White still holds some initiative.

11...♗b7

Black develops a piece and threatens ...c5-c4. There is a sharp alternative in the immediate 11...c5. This allows White to attack the rook in the corner with 12 ♕e4, but Black hopes to regain the time by pestering White's queen. Black has:

a) 12...♘c7 is held to be inferior but looks playable to me. 13 c4 bxc4 14 ♗c2 (14 ♗xc4 d5 15 exd6 ♗xd6 is about equal; Black's active pieces compensate for his slightly worse pawn-structure) 14...g6 and now:

a1) 15 ♗h6 ♖e8 16 ♘c3 ♖b8 17 ♕xc4 ♖b4 18 ♕d3 ♖h4 gave Black active play in Brooks-Kaidanov, New York 1990.

a2) 15 ♘c3 ♖b8 (15...d5 16 exd6 ♗xd6 is also reasonable) 16 ♗a4 ♖b6 17 ♕xc4 (17 ♖d1 may be a better try, but 17...♗b7 18 ♕xc4 d5 19 exd6 ♗xd6 is not clear) 17...d5 18 exd6 ♗xd6 19 a3 ♗e6 20 ♕e2 f5! gave Black counterplay in Van der Wiel-Ki.Georgiev, Wijk aan Zee 1988.

b) 12...♖b8 13 c4 (13 c3 ♗b7 intending ...d6 is fine for Black, while 13 ♗d5 ♘c7 14 ♗f4 ♘xd5 15 ♕xd5 ♖b6 16 ♘c3 ♗b7 17 ♕d2 ♖g6 18 ♘d5 was about even in Lepelletier-Foukakis, Khania 1994) 13...♗b7 14 ♕e2 and here:

b1) 14...d5 15 cxd5 c4 16 d6 cxb3 17 dxe7 ♕xe7 18 axb3 ♘c7 19 ♘c3 ± Liu Dede-Djurić, Jakarta 2001.

b2) 14...b4 denies White the c3-square for the knight and keeps the a2-g8 diagonal closed. 15 ♘d2 ♘c7 16 ♘e4 ♘e6 17 ♕d3 f5! 18 exf6 ♗xf6 19 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 gave Black good counterplay in Kholmov-Smyslov, Sochi 1974.

12 c4

White needs to play actively in the centre to fight for the initiative. 12 c3?! d6 13 ♗f4 dxe5 14 ♕xe5 ♗d6 15 ♕g5 h6 16 ♕g3 ♕f6 17 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 was already a little preferable for Black in Navarro Segura-Peng Xiaomin, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

Therefore the main alternative for White is 12 ♕g4. Now Panczyk and Ilczuk's suggestion of 12...f6 is interesting, but illegal, so we shall look at 12...c5 instead. 13 c3 d6 (13...d5 just gives White extra options such as 14 ♗c2 and 14 ♘d2) 14 exd6 (14 e6 d5! and 14 ♗f4 dxe5 15 ♗xe5 ♘f6 are not promising for White) 14...♗xd6 (or 14...♘xd6 15 ♗h6 ♗f6 16 ♗f4, which was given as '±' by Panczyk and Ilczuk but Black looks fine here) 15 ♗g5 and then:

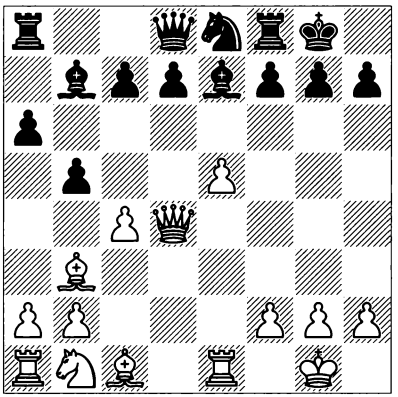
a) 15...♘f6 16 ♕h4 h6 17 ♗xf6 (17 ♗xh6 gxh6 18 ♕xh6 leads nowhere – at the very least Black has 18...♘e4, when White must take a draw with 19 ♕g6+ ♔h8 20 ♕h6+) 17...♕xf6 18 ♕xf6 gxf6 19 ♘d2 ♖fe8 20 ♗c2 ♖ad8 21 ♘e4 ½-½ Svidler-Naiditsch, Dortmund 2005.

b) 15...♕c7!? 16 h3 ♕c6 17 ♘d2 c4 18 ♗c2 f5 19 ♕f3 ♕d7 20 ♕d1 ♘c7 gave Black an

active position in Kovanova-Shadrina, Russian Women's Ch, Oriol 2006.

We now return to 12 c4 *(D)*:

B



12...bxc4

12...d6?! 13 ♘c3 dxe5 14 ♕xd8 ♗xd8 15 cxb5 axb5 16 ♘xb5 is uncomfortable for Black because he is cramped and the e5-pawn is weak, but 12...c5!? is a reasonable alternative. Black will follow up with ...bxc4 and ...d5. White has:

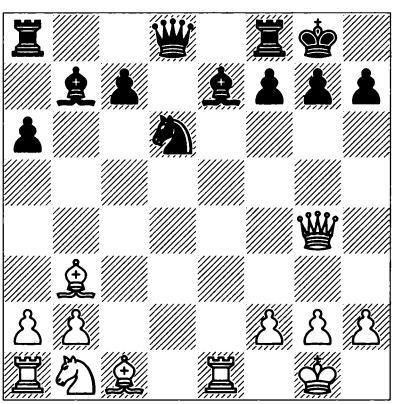
a) 13 ♕d1 bxc4 14 ♗xc4 d5 15 exd6 ♘xd6 gives Black a big lead in development.

b) 13 ♕d3 bxc4 14 ♕xc4 d5 15 exd6 ♘xd6!? (better than 15...♕xd6 16 ♘c3 ±) 16 ♕xc5 ♘e4 gives Black the initiative in return for a pawn.

c) 13 ♕g4 is the most active try, but Black looks OK here too: 13...d6 (Black can also play 13...bxc4 14 ♗xc4 d5, but the text-move looks even simpler) 14 ♘c3 b4 15 ♘d5 dxe5 16 ♖xe5 ♗d6 intending ...♘f6 has been played a couple of times. Black looks fine here.

13 ♕xc4 d5 14 exd6 ♘xd6 15 ♕g4 *(D)*

B



Although Black's position remains very solid, White has a better pawn-structure and a slight initiative.

15...♘b5

Black can also play 15...♗f6. After 16 ♘c3 Black has:

a) 16...♖b8 17 ♗f4 ♗c6 18 ♖ad1 ♖b4 19 ♕g3 ♖d4 20 ♗e5 ♖xd1 21 ♖xd1 ♖e8 22 f4 ♕e7 23 ♘d5 ♗xd5 24 ♖xd5 ± Nijboer-I.Sokolov, Dutch Ch, Amsterdam 1996.

b) 16...♖e8 17 ♗f4 ♖b8 18 h3 ♗c6 19 ♕h5 ♕d7 20 ♕a5 ♗b5 21 ♘xb5 axb5 22 ♕d2 ± Arakhamia-Hebden, British Ch, Scarborough 2004.

c) 16...♘b5 is Black's most common idea in this position. White then has:

c1) 17 ♘xb5 axb5 18 ♗f4 c5 (safer than grabbing the pawn with 18...♗xb2 19 ♖ad1, when White has the initiative) 19 ♖ad1 ♕c8 20 ♕xc8 ♖axc8 21 ♗d6 ♖fd8 22 ♗xc5 ♖xd1 23 ♗xd1 ♗xb2 24 ♗b3 g6 = J.Polgar-Nunn, Hastings 1992/3.

c2) 17 ♘e4 is a better try if White wants to squeeze something out of the opening. 17...♗xe4 (17...♘d4 18 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 19 ♗g5 ♕g6 20 ♕xd4 ♕xg5 21 g3 perhaps gives White a tiny edge because of his better pawn-structure) 18 ♕xe4 ♗d4 (after 18...♖e8 19 ♕xe8+ ♕xe8 20 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21 ♔f1 ♘d4 22 ♗d1 White will untangle and the bishops will ensure long-term pressure) 19 ♕f4 c5 20 ♗e3 (20 ♖b1 may be even better) 20...♗xe3 (Black should at least try 20...♗xb2) 21 fxe3! ± Balogh-Jenni, European Ch, Dresden 2007. White has the better minor piece because he controls d4 and there is pressure against f7.

16 ♘c3 ♘xc3

16...♗f6 is common, and transposes to line 'c' in the previous note.

17 bxc3 ♗d6 18 ♗f4 ♕f6 19 ♗xd6 cxd6 *(D)*

Despite the simplifications White has a nagging edge because he can activate his major pieces quickly. Black should hold, but the position is unpleasant.

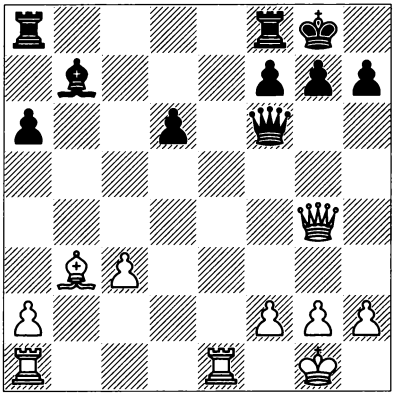
20 ♖ad1

20 ♕d7 ♖ab8 21 ♖e3 ♗c8 22 ♕a4 was also a little better for White in Dorfman-Tkachev, French Ch, Aix-les-Bains 2007.

20...♖ad8 21 ♕b4

White probes the queenside. After 21 ♖e3 ♖fe8 22 ♖de1 ♖xe3 23 ♖xe3 g6 24 h4 h5 25

W



♕b4 ♖d7 Black managed to defend in Carlsen-Leko, Dortmund 2007.

21...♗a8 22 ♖e3 g6?!

After this Black will lose a pawn for nothing. 22...♕g5 23 ♖g3 ♕f6 24 ♕b6 ♖fe8 at least allows Black to take over the e-file.

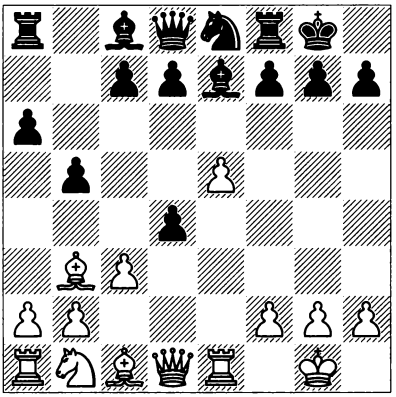
23 ♕b6 ♕g5 24 ♖g3 ♕b5 25 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 26 ♕xd6

± Ivanchuk-Aronian, Morelia/Linares 2008.

B2)

11 c3 *(D)*

B



White offers a pawn to develop quickly and bring maximum control to the centre.

11...dxc3

Black should certainly accept the challenge. 11...d6 12 cxd4 (or even 12 ♕f3) 12...dxe5 13 ♕f3 ♗e6 14 dxe5 ± is pleasant for White, while 11...d5 12 cxd4 c6 13 ♗c2 ± was Short-Beliavsky, Warsaw rapid 2004.

12 ♘xc3

For the pawn White has very easy development and the e5-pawn gives him some extra space which he may be able to use to generate an attack on the kingside. Black must also be careful because his a8-rook can be vulnerable and White has the d5-square at his disposal.

12...d6

This is the most solid response. Black wants to eliminate the annoying e5-pawn and bring his knight back into play. There are other moves too. 12...c6!? and 12...c5!? have been rarely played but are worth considering. The main alternative is the natural 12...♗b7 *(D)*, developing a piece and safeguarding the a8-rook. White has:

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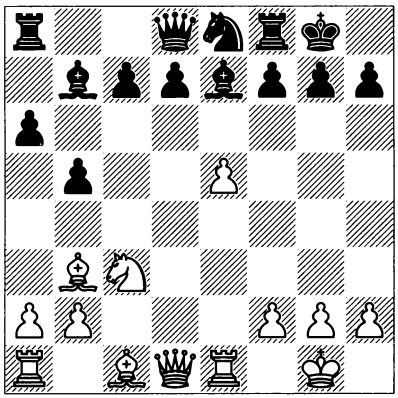


a) 13 ♕d3 c5 (this is a common idea: Black creates a backward – though extra – d-pawn but gets some activity of his own) 14 ♗d5 ♗xd5 15 ♘xd5 ♘c7 16 ♘b6 ♖a7 17 ♗e3 d5 18 exd6 ♘e6 19 ♖ad1 ♕xb6 20 dxe7 ♖xe7 ∓ Romanishin-Tseshkovsky, Ordzhonikidze 1978.

b) 13 ♗c2 d6 14 ♕d3 g6 15 ♗h6 ♘g7 was solid enough for Black in Woldmo-Olofson, corr. 1996.

c) 13 ♗f4 c5 14 ♕g4 c4 15 ♗c2 g6 (15...d5 is also possible; for example, 16 exd6 ♗xd6 17 ♖ad1 ♕b6) 16 ♖ad1 f5 17 ♕h3 was Dujković-Brenjo, Herceg Novi 2006. Now 17...♕c8!? avoids White's e6 advance and prepares ...♘c7.

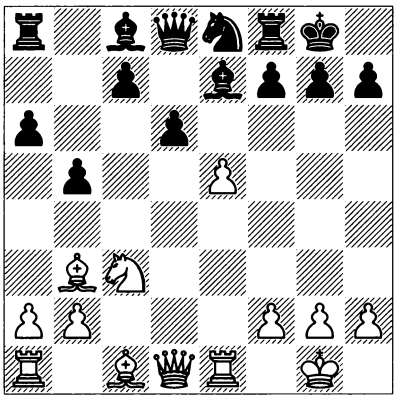
d) 13 ♕h5 d5 14 exd6 ♗xd6 (14...♕xd6!?) 15 ♗g5 ♘f6 16 ♕h4 h6 17 ♗xh6! gxh6 18 ♕xh6 ♘h7 19 ♗c2 f5 20 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 21 ♕g6+ ♔h8 22 ♕xf5 was unclear in Rigo-Pinter, Budapest 1978.

e) 13 ♘d5 ♗xd5 14 ♕xd5 c6 15 ♕f3 (15 ♕e4 looks more flexible) 15...♗c5 16 ♗f4 ♘c7 17 ♕g4?! (this looks too slow, so White should

consider 17 ♖ad1 or even 17 ♖ac1) 17...♘e6 18 ♗h6 d5 19 exd6 ♕f6! 20 ♗e3 ♗xd6 21 ♖ac1 c5 was Oechslein-Schreiber, corr. 1988. Black has solved his development problems and still has an extra pawn.

We return to 12...d6 *(D)*:

W



Now White has a choice:

B21: 13 ♕f3 181
B22: 13 ♗d5 182

Other moves are rare, but not necessarily harmless:

a) 13 ♗f4 dxe5 14 ♕f3 (after either 14 ♕xd8 ♗xd8 15 ♗xe5 or 14 ♗xe5 ♕xd1 15 ♖axd1 ♗e6 16 ♗xe6 fxe6 White has some compensation for the pawn but no more than that) 14...♗g4 (similar and perhaps even stronger is 14...♗b7! 15 ♕xb7 ♘d6! {not 15...exf4? 16 ♖xe7!} 16 ♕f3 exf4) 15 ♕xg4 exf4 16 ♕xf4 ♗d6 17 ♕f3 ♘f6 was level in Klundt-Howell, Nuremberg 1987.

b) 13 ♘d5 dxe5!? (13...♗e6 14 ♕f3 transposes to Line B21) and here:

b1) 14 ♕f3 ♗d6! 15 ♘e7+ ♕xe7 16 ♕xa8 ♘f6 gives Black excellent compensation for the exchange.

b2) 14 ♖xe5 ♗f6 15 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6! (not 15...♘xf6? 16 ♗xf7+!) looks safe enough for Black.

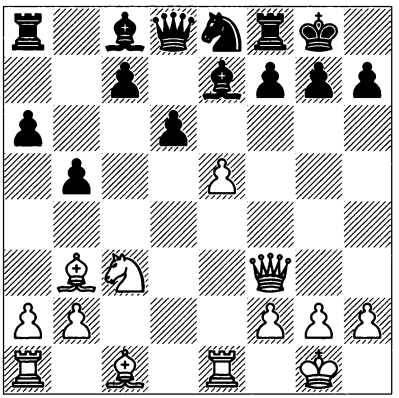
B21)

13 ♕f3 *(D)*

White gains more time by hitting the a8-rook.

13...♗e6 14 ♘d5

B



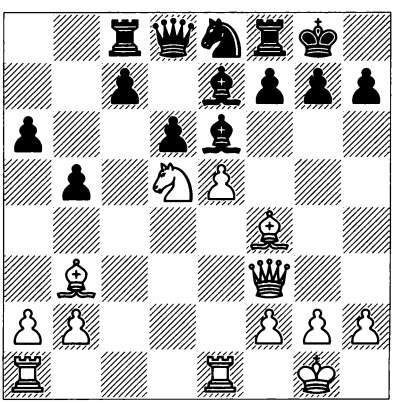
White can also try to keep up the pressure with 14 ♗f4. After 14...♗xb3 (14...dxe5 15 ♗xe5 ♗xb3 transposes) 15 axb3 dxe5 16 ♗xe5, the move 16...♗d6 has been played a couple of times, but Black is uncomfortable: 17 ♘xb5! ♗xe5 18 ♖xe5 ♘d6 19 ♘d4 ♘b5 20 ♘c6 (20 ♘xb5 axb5 21 ♖d1 is even better according to Marin) 20...♘d4 21 ♘xd4 (better than 21 ♕e4 ♘xc6 22 ♕xc6 ♕d6 23 ♕c3 ♖fe8 = Balogh-Harikrishna, George Marx Memorial, Paks 2007) 21...♕xd4 22 ♕c3 gave White pressure in Yakovenko-Kariakin, Foros 2007. 16...♘f6 may be better. After 17 ♖ad1 ♗d6 18 ♗xd6 cxd6 19 ♕c6 White will win back the pawn but Black should be able to neutralize White's slight initiative in this simplified position.

14...♖c8

A sharper idea is 14...♗xd5!? 15 ♗xd5 ♖b8 16 ♗e3 c5 17 ♖ad1 ♕c7 18 e6 fxe6 19 ♗xe6+ ♔h8 20 ♕h3 g6 with unclear play, Timofeev-Sutovsky, Montreal 2006, although this is not without risks.

15 ♗f4 *(D)*

B



15...dxe5

White is very active so Black must be careful. The text-move looks to dissipate the tension in the centre as quickly as possible. 15...♗g5?! 16 ♖ad1 ♔h8 17 ♗c2! gave White a strong initiative in I.Gurevich-Nunn, Hastings 1992/3.

16 ♘xe7+

White can also play 16 ♗xe5 ♗d6 17 ♖ad1 ♗xe5 18 ♖xe5 ♗xd5 19 ♖exd5 (19 ♗xd5 was played in Morales-Perez, Havana 1999 and Black's safest move is 19...♕f6) 19...♘d6, as in Henrichs-Gustafsson, German Ch, Bad Königshofen 2007. White has some compensation for the pawn because his pieces are so active but with such simplifications Black's position is pretty safe.

16...♕xe7 17 ♗xe5 ♘d6 18 ♗xe6

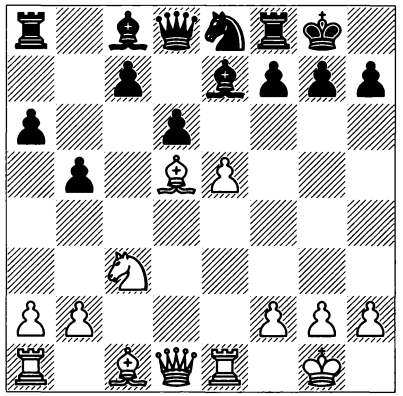
White also got nowhere after 18 ♕c3 ♕g5 19 ♗xe6 fxe6 20 b3 ♕g6 21 ♕c6 ♘f7 22 ♗g3 e5 in Leko-Aronian, FIDE Grand Prix, Jermuk 2009.

18...fxe6 19 ♕c6 ♕e8 20 ♖ac1 ♘c4 21 ♕e4 ♕f7

½-½ Adams-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2008. White has enough pressure for the pawn but nothing more. One possible continuation is 22 ♖e2 ♕f5 23 ♗c3 ♕xe4 24 ♖xe4 ♖fe8 25 ♖ce1 ♔f7 26 ♖f4+ ♔g8 27 ♖fe4 with a repetition of moves.

B22)

13 ♗d5 *(D)*



This is the latest wrinkle in the 8 d4 variation.

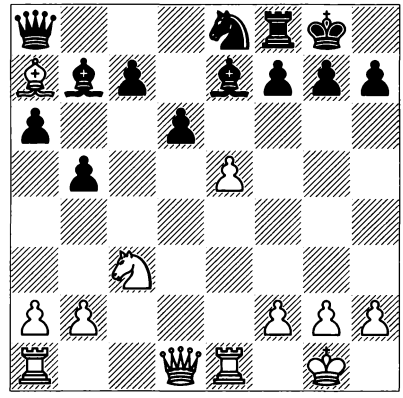
13...♖b8

13...♗e6?! 14 ♗xa8 ♕xa8 looks insufficient after 15 ♗f4 dxe5 16 ♗xe5 ♘d6 17 ♘e2 ♘f5 18 ♘d4.

14 ♗e3 ♗e6

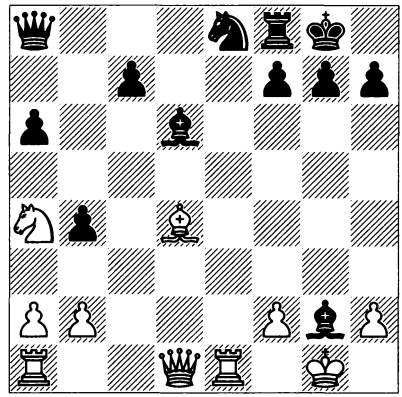
14...c5?! is insufficient: 15 exd6 ♗xd6 (after 15...♕xd6 16 ♘e4 White also has the initiative) 16 ♘e4 (or even 16 ♗xc5!? ♗xh2+ 17 ♔f1 ♗d6 18 ♘e4 ♗e7 19 ♗a7) 16...♕c7 17 ♘xd6 (17 ♖c1 also looks good) 17...♕xd6 (17...♘xd6 18 ♗f4 ♖b6 is awkward, but may be a better try), S.Michailow-Muuss, Osterrönfeld 1996. Here Panczyk and Ilczuk give 18 ♖c1 ±.

15 ♗a7 ♗xd5 16 ♗xb8 ♗b7 17 ♗a7 ♕a8 *(D)*



This move attacks a7 and g2 and looks like it gives Black good chances, but matters are not so simple.

18 exd6 ♗xd6 19 ♗d4 b4 20 ♘a4 ♗xg2 *(D)*



White's a4-knight is offside and his kingside is looking a bit porous. However, White has a neat resource.

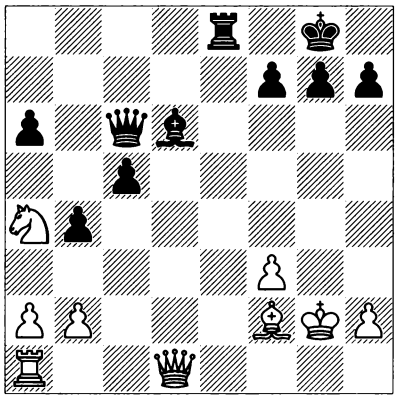
21 ♖xe8! ♕xe8

Not 21...♖xe8? 22 ♕g4.

22 ♔xg2 c5

22...♕e4+ 23 f3 ♕f4 can be answered by 24 ♗g1.

23 ♗e3 ♕c6+ 24 f3 ♖e8 25 ♗f2 *(D)*



Now:

a) 25...c4?! 26 ♘b6 c3 27 bxc3 bxc3 28 ♕d5 ♕c7 29 ♘c4 ♗b4 30 ♖c1 ♖e2 31 ♖xc3 h6 32 ♖e3 ♖xa2 33 ♖e8+ ♔h7 34 ♘e3 ♖xf2+ 35 ♔xf2 ♗c3 36 ♔g2 1-0 L.Dominguez-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2009.

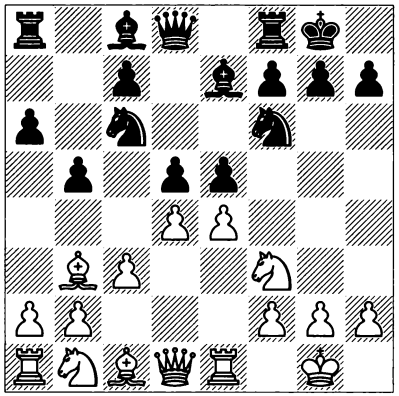
b) In *New in Chess*, Boel gives 25...♖e5 26 b3 ♖g5+ 27 ♗g3 (27 ♔h1 ♖f5) 27...f5! 28 ♔f1 f4 29 ♗f2 ♕d7! with excellent play. After 30 ♘xc5 ♕b5+ 31 ♘d3 ♖d5 32 ♔e2 ♗e5 33 ♖c1 ♗c3 White is so tied up that Black can hardly be worse.

Section 10.4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 d4 *(D)*

Instead of grabbing a pawn, White heightens the tension in the centre. Although this move is not very dangerous for Black, it should not be ignored. Often play resembles an Open Ruy Lopez or Yates Variation, although here Black has a pretty good version of the structures that arise from those lines.

9 d4 is played mostly as a surprise weapon. In a sense White has called Black's bluff (7...0-0) with 8 c3, but then when Black indeed goes for the Marshall with 8...d5 White shows that he was really the one that was bluffing...



Black has two main lines here, and although Line B is considered the main continuation, Line A looks satisfactory to me as well.

A: 9...dxe4 183
B: 9...exd4 184

9...♘xe4 is also playable. 10 dxe5 (10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 c6 =) 10...♗e6 is an Open Ruy Lopez that would come about from the move-order 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♘xe4 6 d4 b5 7 ♗b3 d5 8 dxe5 ♗e6 9 c3 ♗e7 10 ♖e1 0-0. This is outside the scope of this work, but this line is rare enough that Black could consider it without taking on any great additional theoretical burden. After 11 ♘d4, 11...♘xd4 12 cxd4 is a little better for White, while the speculative 11...♘xe5 12 f3 ♗d6 (or 12...♗h4) is probably dubious, but 11...♕e8, as once played by Svidler, is interesting.

A)

9...dxe4

This line is considered inferior, but I have not seen a convincing reason for it to be discarded.

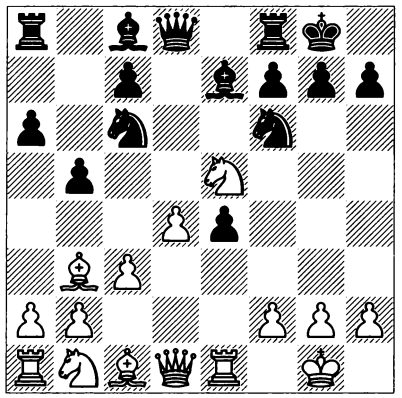
10 ♘xe5 *(D)*

10...♗b7

This is the main line, but 10...♘xe5 looks quite playable to me. At first it seems that Black is just losing a pawn but matters are not so simple because Black will develop very quickly. 11 dxe5 ♕xd1 12 ♗xd1 ♘d7 and now:

a) 13 ♖xe4 ♘c5 14 ♖d4 (14 ♖e2 ♖d8 15 ♗c2 ♗f5! 16 ♘a3 ♘d3 with compensation) 14...♖e8!? (Atalik also gives 14...♘e6 15 ♖d3 ♘c5 16 ♖d4 =) 15 ♗f3 ♗b7 16 ♗xb7 ♘xb7 17

B



♗f4 g5!? 18 ♗g3 f5 19 exf6 ♗xf6 20 ♖d1 ♖e2 21 a4 ♖ae8 is equal, Michielsen-Atalik, Ottawa 2007.

b) 13 ♗c2 and here:

b1) 13...♗b7 14 ♗xe4 (14 ♘d2 ♘xe5 15 ♘xe4 ♖fe8 16 b3 ♖ad8 17 ♗f4 f6 was harmless for Black in Gallagher-Vijayalakshmi, British Ch, Edinburgh 2003) 14...♗xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♖fd8 (15...♖fe8!?) 16 ♘d2 f6 17 exf6 ♗xf6 18 ♔f1 ♘c5 19 ♖e2 a5 20 ♘f3 ♖d1+ 21 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 22 ♘xe1 b4 with compensation, Kriakvin-Sargisian, Saratov 2006.

b2) 13...♘xe5 14 ♗xe4 ♖b8 15 ♗f4 (15 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 16 ♖xe5 ♖d8 with compensation) 15...♗d6 16 ♗xe5 (or 16 ♗g3 ♘c4 17 b3 ♗xg3 18 hxg3 ♘d6 19 ♘d2 ♗e6 = Morozevich-Leko, Erevan rapid 2008) 16...♗xe5 17 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 18 ♖xe5 ♖d8 19 ♔f1 f6 20 ♖e3 ♖d1+ 21 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 22 ♔xe1 ♗f5 23 ♘a3 ♖e8+ 24 ♔d2 ♖d8+ 25 ♔e3 ♖e8+ 26 ♔d2 ♖d8+ ½-½ Morozevich-Shirov, Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006.

11 ♘d2 ♗d6

11...♘xe5 12 dxe5 ♘d7 13 ♘xe4 ♘xe5 14 ♗f4! gave White the initiative in Palac-Beliavsky, Slovenian Team Ch, Celje 2003. Black feels uncomfortable on the e-file and the c7-pawn is under pressure too.

12 f4 exf3 13 ♘dxf3 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5

Leading nowhere is 14 dxe5 ♗c5+ 15 ♗e3 ♗xe3+ 16 ♖xe3 ♘e4 =.

14...♗xe5?!

This just looks wrong. 14...♘d7 is solid, and 14...c5 also looks satisfactory.

15 dxe5

15 ♖xe5 ± is good too.

15...♕xd1 16 ♖xd1 ♘e4

This was Khalifman-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2002. Here Adams gives 17 ♖d7! ♘c5 18 ♖xc7 ♘xb3 19 axb3 ♗d5 20 b4 ♖ae8 21 ♗f4 ±. True enough, but Black can improve on the 14th move, and 10...♘xe5 looks OK too.

B)

9...exd4 *(D)*

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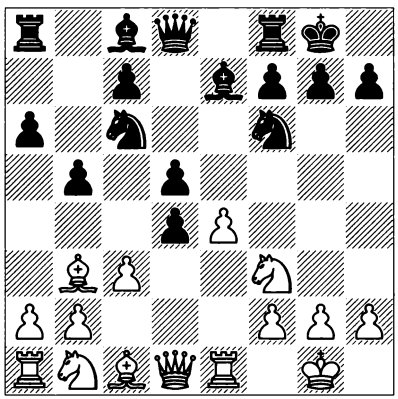


This is the main line and Black has scored pretty well here.

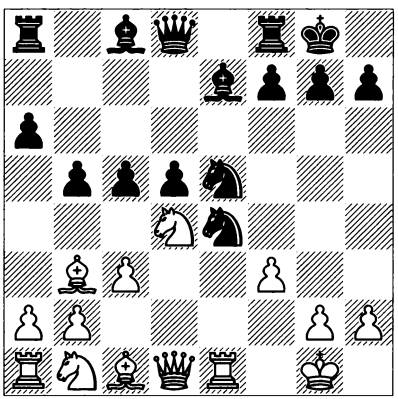
10 e5

10 exd5 ♘xd5 is considered in Section 10.5 under the move-order 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 d4 exd4.

10...♘e4 11 cxd4

After 11 ♘xd4 Black should be bold and play 11...♘xe5! 12 f3 (12 ♗f4 ♗f6 13 ♗xe5?! {better is 13 f3 c5, which is line 'a' below} 13...♗xe5 14 ♘f3 ♗g4! 15 ♕xd5 ♗xf3 16 ♕xe5 ♕h4 17 ♖xe4 ♕xe4 18 ♕xe4 ♗xe4 19 ♘d2 ♗b7 is winning for Black, Belov-Akopian, Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2007) 12...c5! *(D)*.

W



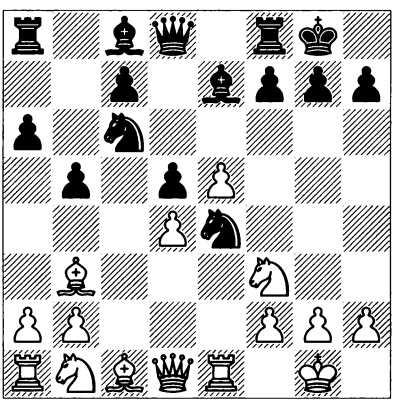
Now 13 ♘e2? and 13 ♘c2? both lose to 13...c4, so White has:

a) 13 ♗f4 ♗f6! 14 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 15 ♘c6 ♗xh2+ 16 ♔xh2 ♕h4+ 17 ♔g1 ♕f2+ 18 ♔h2 ♕g3+ 19 ♔g1 ♘g5! 20 ♔h1 (20 ♔f1 ♗h3!) 20...♕h4+ 21 ♔g1 ♘h3+ 22 gxh3 ♗xh3 was Kruppa-Vladimirov, Frunze 1988. Now even White's most tenacious defence, 23 ♕d2, leaves Black with the initiative after 23...♕g3+ 24 ♔h1 ♗g2+ 25 ♕xg2 ♕xe1+ 26 ♕g1 ♖ae8 27 ♘a3 ♕d2!.

b) 13 fxe4 cxd4 14 exd5 (worse are 14 cxd4?! ♗g4 15 ♕d2 ♘c4 ∓ and 14 ♗xd5?! dxc3! with the point 15 ♗xa8 ♗c5+ 16 ♔h1 ♘d3 –+) 14...♗d6 15 ♗f4 ♖e8 16 cxd4 ♘d3 (Black could try 16...♘f3+!? 17 gxf3 ♗xf4, with the initiative) 17 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 18 ♕xd3 ♕e1+ 19 ♕f1 ♕xf1+ 20 ♔xf1 ♗xf4 21 ♘c3 ♗xh2 ½-½ Ravi-Lukacs, Kolhapur 1987.

We now return to 11 cxd4 *(D)*:

B



The position looks a lot like an Open Ruy Lopez, but here White has managed to play cxd4. This gives White a half-open c-file, but there is less pressure against the d5-pawn so Black can develop his queen's bishop actively. Black has two popular moves:

B1: 11...♗g4 185
B2: 11...♗f5 186

Black can also play the odd 11...♗b4 12 ♘bd2 (12 ♖e3 ♘a5 13 ♗c2 f5 14 ♖e2 ♗e6 15 ♘bd2 ♗e7 16 ♘f1 ♘c4 gave Black good play in Nijboer-Onishchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2005), and here:

a) 12...♗g4?! 13 ♘xe4! is an idea worth remembering. After 13...♗xe1 14 ♘eg5 ♗xf3 (14...♗b4? 15 ♕c2 +–) 15 ♕xf3 White has excellent compensation because of the pressure on the light squares: d5, c6, f7 and h7 are all weak.

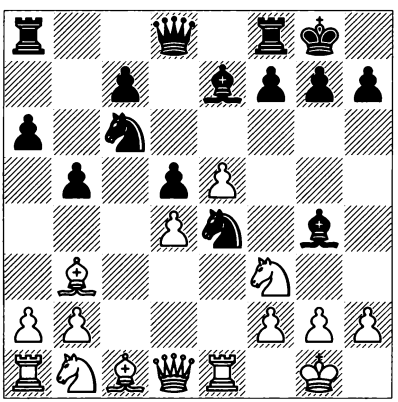
b) 12...♗f5 13 a3 ♗e7?! (Black is just losing tempi, so 13...♗xd2 has to be tried) 14 ♗c2 f6 15 ♘xe4 dxe4 16 ♘h4 ♘xd4 17 ♘xf5 ♘xf5 18 ♕g4 is much better for White, E.Berg-Hebden, Gibraltar 2008.

c) 12...♗xd2 13 ♗xd2 ♗g4 14 ♗e3 ♘a5 15 ♗c2 f5 16 ♗d3 ♖b8 17 h3 ♗h5 18 ♗e2 is a little better for White, because Black lacks counterplay. Matters were made worse after 18...g5? 19 ♗xg5! ♘xg5 20 ♘xg5 ♗xe2 21 ♕d2! ♘c4 22 ♕f4 ± in E.Berg-Olszewski, Najdorf Memorial, Warsaw 2008.

B1)

11...♗g4 *(D)*

W



This is very natural. Black pins the f3-knight and creates pressure on d4. However, it turns out that the threat to double White's pawns is not much of a threat after all.

12 ♘c3

White correctly forces the pace. After 12 ♗e3 Black can play 12...♘a5 or consider 12...♗b4 again, because ♗e3xd2 will cost White a tempo.

12...♗xf3

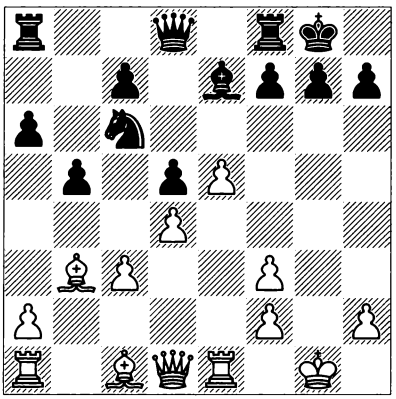
Black can also play 12...♘xc3 13 bxc3 ♕d7 but if he wants this structure it is better to play 11...♗f5 because the bishop has no reason to be on g4 – White can play ♗c2 and h3 may be useful too. As before, Black should avoid 12...♗b4?! 13 ♘xe4! with a strong initiative.

13 gxf3 ♘xc3

13...♘xf2?! 14 ♔xf2 ♗h4+ looks fun, but Black should not trade two good minor pieces for a rook in this position.

14 bxc3 *(D)*

B

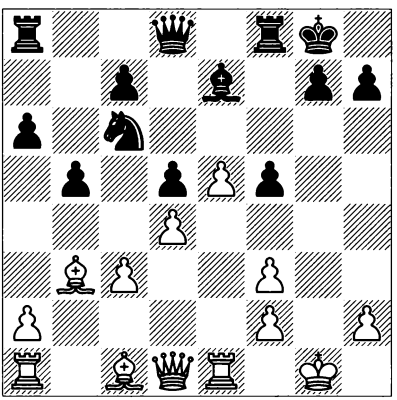


White has strengthened his centre on both fronts. Black's position remains very solid, but White is able to maintain some initiative.

14...f5 *(D)*

14...♕d7 is also possible, but Black should be careful about delaying ...f5 for too long, else White may find it appealing to take *en passant*. A cautionary tale is 15 ♔h1! (15 f4 ♘a5 16 ♗c2 f5) 15...♘d8?! (15...f5 is better) 16 f4 f5?! (suddenly it is too late, so Black should prefer 16...c6 17 ♗c2 f5 18 exf6 ♖xf6 19 ♕d3 ±) 17 exf6 ♗xf6 (17...♖xf6 loses to 18 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 19 ♗xd5+) 18 ♕h5 c6 19 ♗c2 g6 20 ♖g1! (intending f5) 20...♗g7 21 ♖xg6! (this gives White a winning attack) 21...hxg6 22 ♗xg6 ♖f6 23 ♗h7+ ♔f8 24 ♗a3+ ♖d6 25 ♕f5+! ♔e7 26 ♖e1+ ♘e6 27 ♕g6 +– Arizmendi-Nemet, Biel 2006.

W



15 ♔h1 ♘a5 16 ♖g1

White is also a little better after 16 ♗c2 ♔h8 17 ♖g1 ♕d7 18 ♗g5 ♗xg5 19 ♖xg5 ♘c6 20 ♕c1 ♕e6 21 f4 ♘e7 22 a4 c6 23 ♗d3 ♖ac8 24 ♕e3 ± Ivanchuk-Yakovenko, Tal Memorial, Moscow 2007.

16...♕d7 17 ♕e2 ♕e6 18 ♗g5 c6

If 18...♘xb3, then 19 axb3 intending b4 gives White an edge, so Black protects his b5-pawn.

19 ♗c2!

Black was hoping for 19 f4 ♘xb3 20 axb3, when 20...a5 prevents b4 and gives Black the possibility of creating counterplay with ...a4 or ...b4.

19...♖a7

Black wants to guard the second rank, but his pieces are not so well coordinated.

20 f4 ♔h8 21 ♕h5 ♗a3?

This is a shot in the dark.

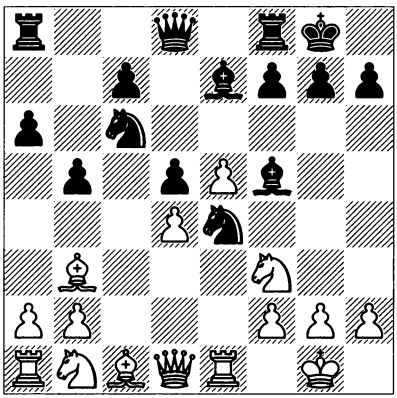
22 ♖g3

White had a strong attack in Shirov-Bacrot, Bundesliga 2003/4.

B2)

11...♗f5 *(D)*

W



Instead of pinning the f3-knight, Black just develops to an active square and strengthens the e4-knight.

12 ♘c3

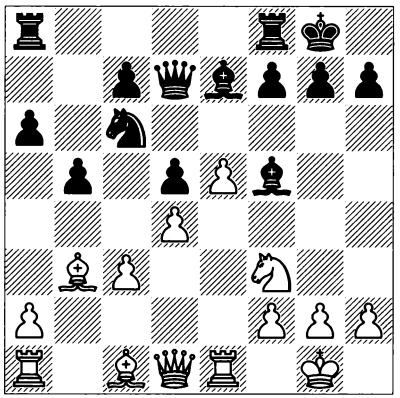
White attacks the d5-pawn to force Black's response. After other moves another point of Black's play is revealed, namely his annoying pressure on the b1-h7 diagonal:

a) 12 ♘bd2 ♘b4 13 ♘f1 c5!. This is a typical idea to fight for central control. Black had

good play in Stellwagen-Vescovi, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

b) 12 h3 ♕d7 13 ♘bd2 (or 13 a3 a5 14 ♗d2 ♘xd2 15 ♘bxd2 a4 16 ♗c2 ♘a5 with equality, Sulskis-Malaniuk, Grodzisk Mazowiecki 2007) 13...♘b4 14 ♘f1 c5 illustrated the same idea in Sulskis-Brunello, European Union Ch, Arvier 2007.

12...♘xc3 13 bxc3 ♕d7 *(D)*



Black has a healthy position. Typical ideas are ...♘a5-c4 and ...a5, which prepares both ...b4 and the lateral ...♖a6, and ...♗a3 to threaten ...♗b2.

14 ♗g5

White looks to exchange dark-squared bishops. He can also fight for the light squares with 14 ♗c2 h6 (14...♘a5 15 ♗g5 ♗a3 16 ♘h4 ♗xc2 17 ♕xc2 ♕g4 has been played a couple of times by Negi, and although he lost both games the idea is worth considering) 15 ♗e3 ♘a5 16 ♘d2 ♖ab8 (this is an odd little move but Black intends to play ...♘c4, so he is anticipating the opening of the b-file) 17 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 18 ♘f1 ♘c4 19 ♗c1 c5 20 ♘e3 ♘xe3 21 ♗xe3 c4 ∓ Nijboer-Yakovenko, Spanish Team Ch, Sabadell 2008. Black's queenside play is more important than anything that White is doing.

Another illustration of both sides' typical ideas is 14 h3 ♘a5 15 ♗c2 ♘c4 16 ♗g5 ♗a3 17 ♘h4 ♗xc2 18 ♕xc2 a5 19 ♖e2 ♖a6 with unclear play, Stellwagen-Gustafsson, Dutch Team Ch, Enschede 2005.

14...♗a3!?

Black can also play 14...♗xg5 15 ♘xg5 h6 16 ♘f3 ♘d8 (Anand), when the knight will come to the blockading square e6.

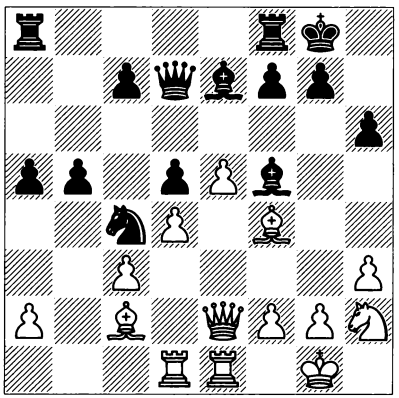
15 ♕e2

15 ♗c1 offers a repetition, while Black is certainly fine after 15 ♘h4 ♗b2 16 ♘xf5 ♕xf5 17 ♗xd5 ♕xg5 18 ♗xc6 ♖ad8 (for example, 19 ♕c2 ♗xa1 20 ♖xa1 with compensation) or Anand's 15 ♗c2 ♗b2 16 ♕b1 ♗xc2 17 ♕xb2 ♗d3.

15...h6 16 ♗f4

After 16 ♗c1 Black can avoid the exchange of bishops with 16...♗e7.

16...♘a5 17 ♗c2 ♘c4 18 ♖ad1 ♗e7 19 h3 a5 20 ♘h2 *(D)*

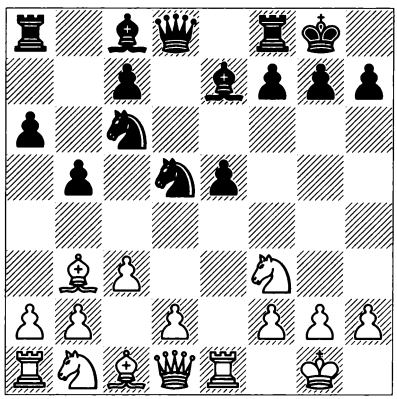


20...♖a6! 21 ♘g4 b4

Black had the initiative in Bacrot-Anand, Bastia rapid 2004.

Section 10.5

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 *(D)*



If White has come this far, he almost universally plays 10 ♘xe5, but there are a few other lines to be aware of.

A: 10 a4 188
B: 10 d4 188

Instead:

a) 10 h3 ♗b7 (or 10...♗f6) 11 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 12 ♖xe5 ♘f4 gives Black good play.

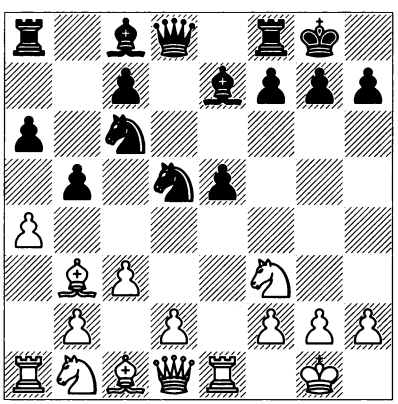
b) 10 d3 ♗b7 (10...♕d6 looks reasonable, while 10...♗f6 11 ♘bd2 ♘f4 12 ♘e4 ♘xd3 13 ♘xf6+ gxf6 14 ♗h6 ♘xe1 15 ♕xe1 ♘e7 16 ♖d1 ♕e8 17 ♘h4 ♗e6 left White scrambling for compensation in Ponomariov-Anand, Leon rapid 2007) 11 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 12 ♖xe5 ♕d7 13 ♕f3 ♖ad8 14 ♘d2 c5 has been defended a couple of times by Zsu.Polgar:

b1) 15 ♕f5 ♕xf5 16 ♖xf5 ♘f6 17 ♗c2 ♘d7 18 ♘f1 g6 19 ♖f4 f5 with compensation, London-Zsu.Polgar, New York Open 1987. The f4-rook is misplaced.

b2) 15 ♘e4 c4!? 16 dxc4 ♘f6 17 ♗e3 ♘xe4 18 ♖xe4 ♕d3 19 ♖d4 ♗xf3 20 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 21 gxf3 ♗f6 22 ♔g2 ♖d7 23 cxb5 axb5 24 f4 was agreed drawn in this unclear ending in Spassky-Zsu.Polgar, Cannes 1987.

A)

10 a4 *(D)*



This cannot be very dangerous. Neither the opening of the a-file nor the attack on the b5-pawn will amount to anything.

10...♗b7 11 axb5 axb5 12 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 13 d3

White plays very solidly. Other options:

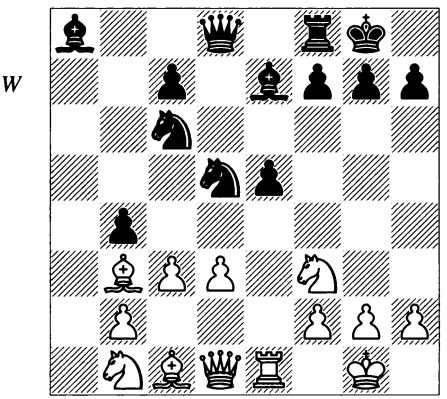
a) 13 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 14 ♖xe5 ♘f4 gives Black good play as usual.

b) 13 ♘a3 ♗xa3 14 bxa3 ♕d6 is equal, although unbalanced.

c) 13 d4 exd4 14 ♘xd4 (or 14 cxd4 ♗f6 =) 14...♘xd4 15 ♕xd4 c5 is certainly OK for Black.

13...b4!? *(D)*

This looks like a clean way to equalize. The solid 13...♗f6 = is also popular.

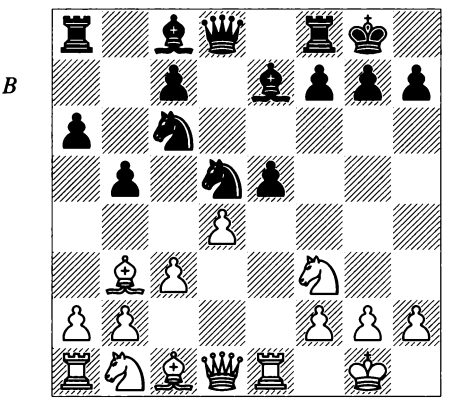


14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 ♖xe5 ♗f6 16 ♖e4 bxc3 17 bxc3 ♘xc3 18 ♘xc3 ♗xc3

= Kr.Georgiev-Kaidanov, Torcy 1991.

B)

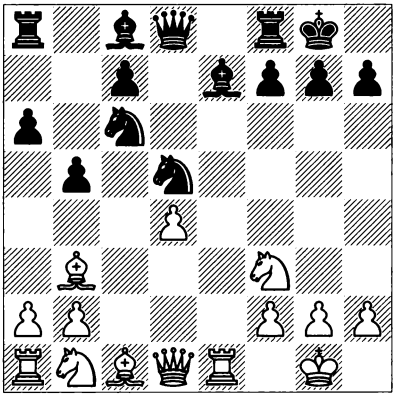
10 d4 *(D)*



This move is logical enough. White simply plays in the centre and tries to develop quickly. Nevertheless, Black also has free piece-play and should not experience any difficulties.

10...exd4 11 cxd4 *(D)*

11 ♘xd4 has been played more frequently, but after 11...♘xd4 12 ♕xd4 ♗b7 Black already has a lead in development and can gain even more time with ...c5 or ...♗f6. With the text-move White prepares to develop his knight to c3 to put pressure on the d5-knight.



11...♗f5

Black develops the bishop actively and sizes up the d3-square. There are several alternatives:

a) 11...♘b6 was recommended by Keres. Although it has not been tried in grandmaster practice, it looks solid enough.

b) 11...♗b4 attempts to disrupt White's coordination, but moving the bishop again gives White some chances for an edge. 12 ♗d2 ♗b7 (12...♗g4 13 ♕c1 ♕d7 14 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 15 ♗xb4 was Nisipeanu-Handke, Sants 2005, and after 15...♘xb4 16 ♘c3 ♕h5 17 ♘e5 White may be a little bit better) 13 ♘c3 ♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♘a5 15 ♗c2 ♘c4 16 ♗g5 f6 17 ♕d3 g6 18 ♗h6 ♖f7 was Nisipeanu-Beliavsky, Pune 2004. Nisipeanu gives 19 ♘d2 ±.

c) 11...♗g4 looks natural. One example: 12 ♘c3 ♘f6 13 ♗e3 ♕d6 14 ♖c1 ♖ad8 15 a4 b4 16 ♘b1 ♘a5 17 ♗c2 ♘d5 18 ♕d3 g6 19 ♘bd2 ♘xe3 20 ♕xe3 (20 fxe3 c5) 20...♗xf3 21 ♕xe7 ♗a8 22 ♕xd6 ♖xd6 = M.Perez-Sargisian, Zafra 2007.

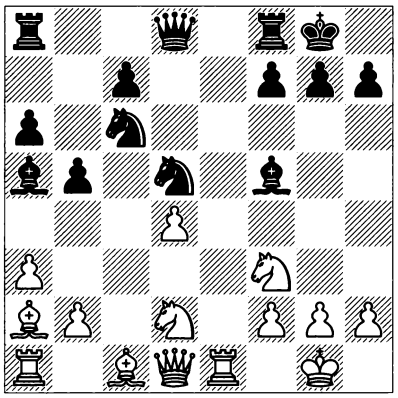
12 ♘bd2

This looks passive. It is more natural for White to follow through with 12 ♘c3, because 12...♘db4 (12...♘b6!? may be better) 13 a3 ♘d3 14 ♖e3 ♘xc1 15 ♖xc1 ♘a5 16 ♗a2 ♗d6 17 ♘e5 ± gave White some initiative in Parligras-Gyimesi, Bundesliga 2007/8.

12...♗b4

Now this move looks quite good. The pin is annoying and the bishop can come around to b6 to exert pressure on the d4-pawn.

13 a3 ♗a5 14 ♗a2 *(D)*



14...♗g6

Or 14...♘f6!?; the d4-pawn is in trouble.

15 h3 ♔h8 16 b4 ♘c3 17 ♕b3 ♘xa2 18 ♕xa2 ♗b6

∓ Nisipeanu-Kasimdzhanov, Vlissingen 2003. Black has the bishop-pair and a better pawn-structure.

Conclusions

The slow 8 d3 and 8 a3 tend to lead to quiet play that is more typical of other lines of the Ruy Lopez. However, by playing in this manner White does not have the space advantage that he almost always enjoys in the Closed lines and Black should equalize without much difficulty. The most important and topical line is 8 d4, which can lead to different kinds of positions with both sides fighting for the initiative. The counter-strike 9 d4 leads to a different kind of game altogether, but Black has done quite well here. White's deviations on move 10 are not very dangerous and Black should reach a healthy position with natural, logical play.

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8 h3 – Chapter 9
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9 d4 – Chapter 10.4
9...♘xd5 10 ♘xe5
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13...♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♗e3
15 ♕e2 – Chapter 7.4
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Part 1: Main Lines

8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3

1: Spassky Variation
15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8
17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4 ♕h5 *20*
19 axb5 axb5 *20*
A: 20 ♗xd5 *21*
B: 20 ♘e4 *21*
C: 20 ♘f1 *22*
C1: 20...♖fe8 *22*
C2: 20...♗f5 *24*
C21: 21 ♕d1 *24*
C22: 21 ♕d2 *25*
D: 20 ♕f1 *26*
D1: 20...♖fe8 *26*
D2: 20...♗h3 *28*

2: Old Main Line: 18...f5/18...bxa4
15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♕d3 ♖ae8
17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4
2.1: 18...f5?! *31*
A: 19 ♕f1 *32*
B: 19 axb5!? *37*
2.2: 18...bxa4 *39* 19 ♖xa4 f5
20 ♕f1 ♕h5
A: 21 c4 *40*
B: 21 ♖xa6 *41*
2.3: 18...bxa4 19 ♖xa4 f5 20
♕f1 ♕h5 21 f4 *42*
A: 21...g5?! *42* 22 ♖xa6 gxf4
A1: 23 ♖xc6 *43*
A2: 23 ♗xf4! *43*
B: 21...♖b8?! *44* 22 ♗xd5
cxd5
B1: 23 ♕g2 *45*
B2: 23 ♖xa6 *46*
C: 21...♖fe8 *46*
C1: 22 ♖xa6 *47*
C2: 22 ♕f2 *48* 22...g5!
C21: 23 ♖xa6 *48*
C22: 23 fxg5 *49*

3: 15 ♗e3: Other Lines
15 ♗e3 *51* 15...♗g4 16 ♕d3
3.1: 16...f5 *51* 17 f4 g5 18
♕f1 ♕h5 19 ♘d2 ♔h8 20
♗xd5 cxd5
A: 21 a4 *52*
B: 21 fxg5!? *53*
3.2: 16...♖ae8 17 ♘d2 f5 *54*
18 ♕f1 ♕h5 19 f4 ♔h8 20
♗xd5 cxd5
A: 21 ♕g2 *56*
A1: 21...g5 *55*
A2: 21...♖e4 *56*
B: 21 a4 *57*
B1: 21...g5?! *57*
B2: 21...bxa4 *58*
3.3: 16...♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♕h5 *60*
A: 18 ♗c2 *61*
B: 18 ♕f1 *63*
C: 18 a4 *64*
3.4: 16...♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6
A: 18 ♗d1?! *65*
B: 18 ♗g5?! *66*
C: 18 c4?! *66*
D: 18 ♗xd5 *67* 18...cxd5 19
♕f1 ♕h5 20 a4
D1: 20...f5?! *68*
D2: 20...bxa4 *69*
E: 18 ♕f1 *69* 18...♕h5 19
f3!?

E1: 19...♗f5?! *70*
E2: 19...♖f6?! *71*
E3: 19...♘xe3 *71*

4: Modern Variation: 15 ♖e4
15 ♖e4 *74* 15...g5!
A: 16 ♕e2 *75*
B: 16 ♕f3 *77* 16...♗f5
B1: 17 ♗xd5 *77*
B2: 17 ♗c2 *78*
C: 16 ♕e1 *80*
C1: 16...f5 *80*
C2: 16...♗f5 *81*
D: 16 ♕f1 *81*
D1: 16...♕xf1+ *81*
D2: 16...♕h6!? *83*
D3: 16...♕h5 *85* 17 ♘d2 ♗f5 18 f3 ♘f6!
D31: 19 ♖e1 *87*
D32: 19 ♕g2 *88*
D33: 19 a4 *89*

Part 2: Other Lines

8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6

5: Refined Rook-Lift: 12 d3
12 d3 *92* 12...♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♖e4
A: 15...♗d7 *93*
B: 15...♘f6 *94*
C: 15...♕d7 *96* 16 ♘d2 ♗b7 17 ♖e1 c5 18 ♘e4 ♗e7
C1: 19 ♗g5 *98*
C2: 19 a4 *99*
D: 15...♕f5 *99* 16 ♘d2 ♕g6
D1: 17 a4 *100*
D2: 17 ♘f1 *101*
D3: 17 ♖e1 *102* 17...f5
D31: 18 f4 *103*
D32: 18 a4 *104*
D33: 18 c4 *106*

6: Elite Equalizer: 12 d3 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♗f5
12 d3 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♗f5 *108*
A: 14 ♘d2 *108*
B: 14 ♕f3 *109*
B1: 14...♖e8 *110*
B2: 14...♕h4 *112* 15 g3 ♕h3
B21: 16 ♘d2 *113*
B22: 16 ♗xd5 *114* 16...cxd5
B221: 17 ♗f4 *114*
B222: 17 ♗e3 *114*
B223: 17 ♕xd5 *115*
17...♖ad8 18 ♕g2
B2231: 18...♕h5 *116*
B2232: 18...♕xg2+ *118*

7: Early Deviations
7.1: 12 ♖e1 *120* 12...♗d6 13 g3
A: 13...♖e8 *121*
B: 13...♗f5 *122*
7.2: 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e2 *125*
A: 13...♗g4 *125*
B: 13...♕h4 *126* 14 g3
B1: 14...♕h5 *126*
B2: 14...♕h3 *127*
7.3: 12 ♗xd5 cxd5 13 d4 ♗d6 14 ♖e3 *128*
7.4: 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 15 ♕e2 *131*
A: 15...♗g4 *131*
B: 15...♗d7 *132*
7.5: 12 d4 ♗d6 13 ♖e1 ♕h4 14 g3 ♕h3 *134* 15 ♗xd5 *134*

Part 3: Anti-Marshall

8: Anti-Marshall: 8 a4
8 a4 *137*
8.1: 8...b4 *137*
A: 9 d4 *138*
B: 9 d3 *139* 9...d6
B1: 10 ♘bd2 *140*
B11: 10...♗e6 *140*
B12: 10...♘a5 *141*
B2: 10 a5 *142* 10...♗e6 11 ♘bd2 ♕c8
B21: 12 ♗c4 *144*
B22: 12 ♘c4 *145*
8.2: 8...♗b7 *147* 9 d3 d6
A: 10 c3 *148* 10...♘a5 11 ♗a2 c5 12 ♘a3 ♕d7 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♗d2
A1: 14...h6 *149*
A2: 14...c4 *149*
B: 10 ♘c3 *150*
C: 10 ♘bd2 *152*

9: Anti-Marshall: 8 h3
8 h3 *155* 8...♗b7 9 d3
A: 9...d5!? *155*
B: 9...d6 *159* 10 a3 ♘a5 11 ♗a2 c5
B1: 12 ♘c3 *161* 12...♘c6
B11: 13 ♗g5 *161*
B12: 13 ♘h2 *162*
B13: 13 ♘d5 *163*
B2: 12 ♘bd2 *164* 12...♘c6 13 ♘f1 ♗c8!
B21: 14 c3 *165*
B22: 14 ♗g5 *166*
B23: 14 ♘e3 *167* 14...♗e6
B231: 15 ♗d5 *167*
B232: 15 ♘d5 *168*

10: Other Anti-Marshall Lines
10.1: 8 d3 *170*
10.2: 8 a3 *172*
10.3: 8 d4 *173* 8...♘xd4
A: 9 ♗xf7+ *174* 9...♖xf7 10 ♘xe5 ♖f8 11 ♕xd4 c5 12 ♕d1
A1: 12...♕c7 *175*
A2: 12...♗b7 *176*
B: 9 ♘xd4 *178* 9...exd4 10 e5 ♘e8
B1: 11 ♕xd4 *178*
B2: 11 c3 *180* 11...dxc3 12 ♘xc3 d6
B21: 13 ♕f3 *181*
B22: 13 ♗d5 *182*
10.4: 8 c3 d5 9 d4 *183*
A: 9...dxe4 *183*
B: 9...exd4 *184* 10 e5 ♘e4 11 cxd4
B1: 11...♗g4 *185*
B2: 11...♗f5 *186*
10.5: 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 *187*
A: 10 a4 *188*
B: 10 d4 *188*

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The Marshall Attack is a chess opening like no other. Rather than subjecting himself to the 'Spanish torture' so typical in the Ruy Lopez, Black simply gives away a centre pawn. But in return, he gets long-term attacking chances and activity that can persist well into the endgame.

It is almost a century since US Champion Frank Marshall invented his sensational gambit, but it is still controversial, and more popular than ever amongst the best players in the world. In their hands, the Marshall Attack looks remarkably solid – even if White neutralizes Black's attacking chances and remains a pawn up, Black often achieves full positional compensation.

However, the Marshall appears a forbidding opening to ordinary club players, who feel that the theory is too difficult to understand and much too complex to memorize. Many simply avoid it with both colours. That, argues David Vigorito, is a shame. He shows that many typical Marshall positions can be broken down into elements that we can all grasp, and so build up an intuition to guide us. Then we are able to tackle this incredible opening and develop a feel for why pieces go to the squares that they do, and when Black has sufficient compensation, and when he does not.

Of course, the Marshall remains a highly sharp and concrete opening, even to those who are versed in its unique brand of black magic. Vigorito provides detailed, cutting-edge theoretical coverage of all its main lines and the most important Anti-Marshall systems.

David Vigorito is an International Master from the United States. He plays regularly in high-level competitions, including the US Championship. He has written extensively for a variety of publications and is a chess teacher. This is his second book for Gambit.

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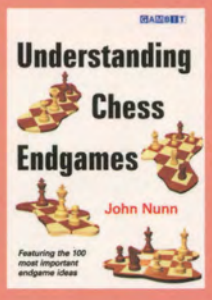

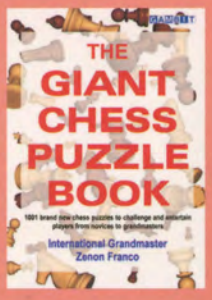
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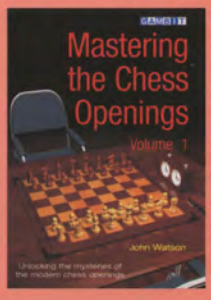

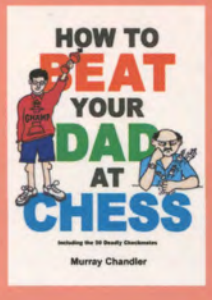

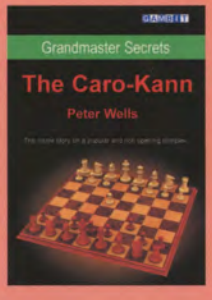

£14.99 $23.95
ISBN-13: 978-1-906454-17-3
ISBN-10: 1-906454-17-5
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